HENRY B. STANTON AS A POLITICAL ABOLITIONIST

by

Arthur Harry Rice

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Richard F. W. Whittemore, Sponsor
Professor Frederick Kershner

Approved by the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date MAR 18 1968

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

1968

ABSTRACT

HENRY B. STANTON AS A POLITICAL ABOLITIONIST

by

Arthur Harry Rice

Dissertation Committee:

Professor Richard F. W. Whittemore, Sponsor
Professor Frederick Kershner

Approved by the Committee on the Degree of Doctor of Education

Date MAR 18 1968

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education in
Teachers College, Columbia University

1968

A divided mind--too pragmatic for staunch moral abolitionists, too idealistic for politicians--prevented Henry B. Stanton from achieving personal success in public life. Nevertheless, this ambivalence made Stanton more representative of the anti-slavery public than those abolitionists who have received more attention from historians. Moral reform and political action competed for the commitment of Henry B. Stanton from the days of his New England boyhood in the early decades of the nineteenth century. As a young man in western New York Stanton had begun a promising career in journalism and politics when he was caught up in the Great Revival of Charles G. Finney and decided to dedicate himself to the cause of moral regeneration.

While pursuing pre-ministerial studies at Lane Seminary in Ohio, Stanton became aware of his duty to help eliminate the greatest moral wrong of his day: slavery. Abandoning his studies, Stanton, eloquent as an orator, lucid as a writer, and skilled as an organizer, became one of the most influential of the abolitionists who carried the anti-slavery message, established societies and directed the national campaign against slavery.

Before long Stanton's pragmatic bent made him one of the anti-Garrison leaders within the movement. Acknowledging no conflict between political activity and moral reform, the twin themes of his public life, he sought to use the former to secure the latter. When the American Anti-Slavery Society divided over this and other issues, Stanton became a leader of the Liberty Party, believing it to be the only existing agency through which anti-slavery power could be manifested. When it failed to loosen the traditional party allegiances of anti-slavery men, he helped to channel Liberty strength into a more broadly-based political organization. When the Free Democratic Party fared poorly in 1848, Stanton became disillusioned with third parties. Impressed by the Barnburner faction of the Democratic Party in New York, Stanton resolved to work with that nucleus with the intention of turning the Democracy into an engine of anti-slavery reform. The New York reformers welcomed Stanton, offering him the candidacy from his home district to the State Senate. After his election, Stanton quickly adapted to the role of regular Democrat, remaining silent on issues that would have seared his soul in the 1830's. Stanton broke with the Pierce party after the rejection of a patronage request, the conflict over slavery in Kansas and the founding of the Republican Party.

Stanton worked indefatigably for the new party. The election of Lincoln in 1860 and the outbreak of civil war seemed to forecast the demise of slavery. Stanton devoted his speaking talents to securing this objective while occupying the position of Deputy Collector of the New York Port, a reward for his party labors. Scandal soon arose over the management of affairs within his department. Stanton's negligence was proved, but the evidence of malefaction is unconvincing. He was compelled to resign and witness the achievement of the long sought objective of abolition as a private citizen. Stanton used what influence remained to him to press for the adoption of the Civil War Amendments to the Constitution and thereafter viewed events from the perspective of a lawyer and a newspaper editorial writer. Stanton died at the age of 81, a veteran of many campaigns, a man whose inconstancy and impulsiveness had deprived him of personal rewards that his considerable talents might have earned. Nevertheless, his success in arousing and mobilizing anti-slavery sentiment entitles him to a prominent place in the history of the abolitionist movement.

PREFACE

Since there is no substantial collection of the papers of Henry B. Stanton a full biography of the man would be difficult, if not impossible to produce. I have chosen to concentrate on Stanton's anti-slavery activities and particularly on his role as a political abolitionist. For this aspect of his life, the sources are abundant. Stanton's career as a lawyer, his journalistic activities, and his personal life are given little attention in this work.

The librarians in the depositories which I visited, who provided their assistance so willingly, have earned my sincere appreciation. I am also indebted to the many librarians in institutions which I did not visit who searched their files for manuscripts pertaining to Henry B. Stanton and sent me copies of relevant materials. The assistance and information provided by Mrs. Rhoda Jenkins, Mrs. Nora Stanton Barney, Miss Alma Lutz, Mr. Paul Sarnoff, Mr. Roland Woodwell and Mrs. Earl Mosley are also gratefully acknowledged.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professors Dwight L. Dumond and Louis Filler for their advice and encouragement during the early stages of my research, and to Professor James McPherson for the valuable information which he supplied. I wish particularly to thank Professor Richard F. W. Whittemore, my adviser and sponsor, for the care with which he read the manuscript in all of its stages, for the important recommendations and suggestions which he made, and especially for his encouragement and for the sincere interest which he showed in me and the study.

Many others have provided suggestions and encouragement during the course of my research. Although I do not mention them here by name, I wish to affirm my gratitude for their contributions.

The typist of this study, Mrs. Anne Goldstein, deserves much credit for her diligent labor which produced so much in so short a time.

None of the people referred to, of course, are responsible for any errors that appear in this study.

A.H.R.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER PAGE

INTRODUCTION 1

I. THE MAKING OF AN ABOLITIONIST 3

Ancestry 4

Connecticut Boyhood 6

The Emergence of a Moral Reformer 11

II. OHIO ABOLITIONIST 28

III. ANTI-SLAVERY AGENT 58

IV. DEFENDER OF CIVIL LIBERTIES 80

V. POLITICAL ACTIVIST 108

Failure of the Moral Appeal 108

Political Action 112

VI. THE SCHISM IN MASSACHUSETTS 132

The Woman Question 137

No Human Government 145

VII. NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTROVERSY 175

The National Organization Is Captured 193

The World Anti-Slavery Convention 206

VIII. LIBERTY PARTY LEADER 229

Origins of the Liberty Party 231

Liberty Party Campaigner 243

IX. MAN OF ONE IDEA 267

CHAPTER PAGE

X. STANTON BECOMES A FREE DEMOCRAT 286

XI. STANTON AS A DEMOCRAT 311

Attempts to Reform the Democratic Party 313

State Senator 316

Stanton as Jacksonian Democrat 329

XII. BUILDING A NEW PARTY 352

The Republican Victory 366

The Scramble for Offices 372

XIII. STANTON AND THE CRISIS OF THE UNION 385

Advocate of Total War 390

Union Orator 394

The Negro: Object as Agent 396

Radical Politics 398

The Counter-Revolution 409

Negro Suffrage 411

End of Reconstruction 416

Stanton's Errors 421

XIV. STANTON ACCUSED OF FRAUD 422

Origins of the Inquiry 425

Congressional Investigation 429

The Middleton Bond 434

The Nassau and Bermuda Bonds 436

The Jose Case 439

XV. STANTON'S DEFENSE 441

CHAPTER PAGE

Stanton's Guilt 445

A Conspiracy Thesis 447

  Stanton as Scapegoat 448

  Enemies within the Custom House 453

Stanton's Ouster 458

Conclusion 462

XVI. NESTOR OF THE PRESS 463

Journalistic Career 463

  The New York Dailies 468

  The Warmoth Affair 470

  Random Recollections 472

Politics 473

  Last Days 476

XVII. STANTON'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT 479

BIBLIOGRAPHY 490

INTRODUCTION

Henry B. Stanton endeavored for three decades to awaken a nation to a realization of the horrendous nature of the institution of human slavery. He labored in the interest of the oppressed black race until the conscience of a nation was sufficiently aroused to resist the extension of the paramount social evil of the day.

While some of the leaders of the abolitionist movement--Weld, Birney, Garrison, Smith, Phillips--have been made the subjects of studies, Henry B. Stanton has been passed over. Yet Stanton, according to one of the most knowledgeable of anti-slavery historians, was one of the three most important leaders of the crusade against slavery.[1] The present study is an attempt to fill the void and provide as clear a description of Henry B. Stanton's career as a political abolitionist, as it is possible to put together from the available sources.

Henry B. Stanton was a masterful orator, ranking in this field with Theodore Weld and Wendell Phillips. He was a penetrating thinker, a talented organizer, a skillful administrator, a leader. He was endowed with grace, charm, wit and passion. Above all Stanton was a man of great faith. He trusted God and he trusted his fellow countrymen and he believed that through the cooperation of both, slavery, the most blatant contradiction between the theory and practice of both Christianity and democracy, would be obliterated.

---

[1] Dwight L. Dumond, _Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America_ (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 164.

As he trod the path of nineteenth century reform, Stanton was faced with numerous difficult decisions. While he erred in judgment, as we in retrospect can see, his mistakes are attributable to an excess of that quality which provided his strength. Stanton's prime fault was excessive faith. He abandoned the field of battle confident that victory had been won, secure in the belief that equality would follow the acceptance of the Civil War amendments to the Constitution.

The present generation may belatedly justify Stanton's faith. If it can amass the energy, the courage, the determination which Stanton exhibited, it can make his fervent wish for equal opportunity a reality.

History repeats the problems it has not seen solved. The story of failure or partial success is as relevant to the student of the past as its most successful achievements. Stanton's life is a testament to those qualities that make for success and a lesson to those who would content themselves with the belief that moral work can be left to others to complete.

CHAPTER I

THE MAKING OF AN ABOLITIONIST

Henry Brewster Stanton was born on June 27, 1805 in the tiny hamlet of Pachaug, in the northern part of the town of Preston, New London County, Connecticut. Joseph Stanton, Henry's father, had as a young man left his birthplace in Washington County, Rhode Island, to settle in neighboring New London County, where he became a merchant engaged in trade with the West Indies. He met Susan Brewster, a native of Preston and they were married on January 25, 1803. Henry was their first son and the second of their six children.[1]

Henry's father was an enterprising businessman. When the War of 1812 was in progress he abandoned the West India trade. Joseph Schofield, an Englishman who had established in Preston a factory containing the only wool carding machine in the area, invited Joseph to become a partner in this prosperous business.[2] About the same time, Joseph Stanton also became a partner in the Fanning Manufacturing Company which erected a cotton mill on the Pachaug River.[3] Later he expanded his business operations to include a machine factory and three country stores.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 1-3.

[2] D. Hamilton Hurd (comp.), History of New London County Connecticut with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men (Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis Company, 1882), p. 404.

[3] Daniel K. Phillips, A History of Griswold Connecticut from the Earliest Times to the Entrance of Our Country into the World War in 1917 (n.p.: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1929), p. 101.

Ancestry

Henry's paternal line in America went back to Thomas Stanton, who had been born in London and sailed to Virginia at the age of twenty. After short stays in Virginia and in Boston he migrated to Hartford.[2] For a dozen years he remained there mastering Indian dialects and becoming an interpreter general for the British. His name was connected with every major transaction between the New England colonists and the Indians between 1636 and 1670.[3] He married Ann Lord in Hartford and moved to Pawkatuck where he erected a trading house through which he monopolized the Indian trade. In 1651 he brought his family to Pequot, later called Stonington, where he served as a judge of the New London County Court and deputy for ten years to the General Court.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 19.

[2] Katherine B. S. Chamberlin, "The Record of My Ancestry, Barney-Blatch Family Book of Origins" (unpublished genealogy in possession of Mrs. Rhoda Jenkins); and Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

[3] Frances M. Caulkins, History of New London, Connecticut, From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612 to 1852 (New London: The Author, 1852), p. 101.

[4] *Ibid.*; Stanton, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

Four of Thomas' descendants served in King Phillip's War and many others filled positions in the colonial ranks against the Indians and French. Henry Stanton's grandfather and great grandfather were officers during the War for Independence and three Stantons gave their lives and two others were wounded in defense of Fort Griswold when it was stormed by Benedict Arnold.[1] Stantons regularly filled important political offices in colonial and post-revolutionary New England.[2] Patriotism, courage and sense of public responsibility characterized Henry Stanton's paternal ancestors. The prototype was Sir Malgerus, who, according to legend, withstood, in Belvoir, his castle, the assault of William the Conqueror in 1066 and was made Lord of Stanton, a Saxon word meaning "stone town."[3]

Love of country and military heroism characterized Stanton's maternal ancestors also. Susan Brewster's grandfather served at the Battle of White Plains during the Revolutionary War. Her father, Simon, was one of the survivors of Benedict Arnold's attack on

---

[1] Katherine B. S. Chamberlin, "The Record of My Ancestry, Barney-Blatch Family Book of Origins" (unpublished genealogy in possession of Mrs. Rhoda Jenkins), passim; and Frances M. Caulkins, The Stone Records of Groton (Norwich: New London Historical Society, 1903), pp. 60, 76, 94.

[2] Chamberlin, op. cit., passim; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 1-3; and "Forty Years in Politics," New York Times, December 7, 1879, p. 5.

[3] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," pp. 2-3, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library. Robert B. Stanton was the son of Henry B. Stanton's brother, Robert L. Stanton. The Stanton family claimed that Hamnet, the son of William Shakespeare was named after Hamnet Sadler, the husband of Judith Stanton, ibid., p. 4.

Fort Griswold on September 6, 1781. A commemoration of this battle was observed annually in the region where Henry B. Stanton grew to manhood.[1]

Connecticut Boyhood

Like her famous ancestor, William Brewster of Plymouth, Susan Brewster was pious and strong-willed.[2] She raised her children to be God-fearing members of the Congregational Church. Henry and his brothers and sisters worshipped and shivered in Pachaug's unheated church, a large wooden structure in the severest order of Puritan architecture. Opposite the front entrance was a whipping post and nearby were the stocks, stern reminders of the consequences of defying the laws of God and man. Prayer sessions were long and arduous and there was little to look forward to when the service ended; Sabbatarian laws were strictly enforced. Deacons and other officials would arrest any person found riding on Sunday unless he was on his way to or from services or seeking a physician.[3]

The religious mood of the community was oppressive and somber, but it was also awesome and inspiring. Henry heard from his grandmother descriptions of the sermons of George Whitefield, of the mellow voice, dramatic gestures and thrilling appeals which swayed great audiences. It was said that renowned preacher could bring a congregation to tears simply by the way he pronounced "Mesopotamia."[1] Henry himself listened to emotional sermons delivered by itinerant Baptist and Methodist preachers. In legend and actuality, models of oratory were presented to the impressionable and ambitious youth. The righteousness of God and the sinfulness of man, the unvarying themes of the speakers, did much to determine the young man's view of life.

---

[1] Katherine B. S. Chamberlin, "The Record of My Ancestry, Barney-Blatch Family Book of Origins" (unpublished genealogy in possession of Mrs. Rhoda Jenkins), passim; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 3-6; and Frances M. Caulkins, The Stone Records of Groton (Norwich, Connecticut: New London Historical Society, 1903), p. 60.

[2] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 7, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

[3] Stanton, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

Politics and war also were exciting to young Henry. His father was a local political leader of the Madisonian party at the time of the War of 1812. A stanch opponent of the Federalists, Joseph once drove a company of Federalist militia from his property. He commanded an army division during the war and at its conclusion took Henry, a lad of ten, to visit relatives in Rhode Island. There the young man met Oliver Hazard Perry, Joseph's cousin, and heard from the lips of the illustrious Commodore an account of the thrilling victory on Lake Erie. A veteran of the war taught the lad to stand on a chair and say, "The Hartford Convention was hatched in the purlieus of Hell" to the admiration of his auditors.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 13; and Norris Galpin Osborn (ed.), History of Connecticut in Monograph Form (New York: The States History Company, 1925), II, 295.

[2] Stanton, op. cit., pp. 8-10.

Political conflict was intense in Connecticut. The Federalist-Congregationalist clique dominated both religion and politics until the Federalists of other religious denominations formed a coalition with the Jeffersonians against the ruling Blue Law dynasty. At thirteen Henry witnessed a bloodless revolution which secured by a bare majority the adoption of a new state constitution, separating church and state.[1] Political partisanship seemed as natural to the young man as family loyalty, religious piety and patriotism.

Each Fourth of July was celebrated jubilantly by the patriotic Stanton family. After the Declaration of Independence would be read and thirteen toasts given with lemon punch, the strongest drink served in the Stanton household, volunteers were called upon to contribute toasts. Henry Clay was the political idol of the family. On Independence Day of 1824, when toasts were solicited, Henry Stanton sprang to his feet and gave: "Henry Clay: the eloquent champion of domestic manufactures and internal improvements." This was by all odds the shortest speech that Stanton, participant in sixteen Presidential campaigns, ever delivered.[2]

The Stantons were anxious about the moral and intellectual growth of their children. Henry attended the traditional little red school house in Pachaug where he labored over the Westminster Catechism and the commonly used texts in spelling, arithmetic, grammar, geography, surveying and history. He was an avid student, who read and re-read all material available: the Bible, psalm books and professional books of the clergy, physicians and lawyers of the town.[1] After his schooling in Pachaug, Henry attended the academy at Jewett City, in the town of Preston, where the Stantons had moved in 1814. Henry's favorite teacher was George D. Prentice, a local scholar just two and one half years his senior. Prentice was skilled in wrestling, running and the use of his hickory stick to inspire his charges. Later a graduate of Brown, Prentice became a poet, biographer and journalist. In 1830 he launched a highly successful career as editor of the Louisville Journal.[2] Prentice had wit, enthusiasm and a skill with words that enlivened his teaching and set an example for his eager young students. He was also a devotee of politics, and, like the Stantons, an ardent Clay supporter. He later wrote a full length biography of the Kentucky statesman.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 10; and Morris Galpin Osborn (ed.), History of Connecticut in Monograph Form (New York: The States History Company, 1925), II, 295.

[2] Stanton, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

Merging with Henry's love of learning, politics, oratory and God was a warmth and compassion for his fellow man, nurtured by his sympathetic and affectionate mother.[1] Stanton, when an octogenarian, recalled with horror having seen, as a child, a wretch scourged at the whipping post, a drunkard writhing in the stocks, and a Negro executed on the gallows. The Stanton family owned a Negro slave who often sang Henry to sleep with a touching ballad of the death of the Indian chief, Miantonomoh, who had suffered torture and death at the hands of Uncas, the Mohegan chief, after having been delivered to him by white commissioners. Stanton then and there vowed that he would become the champion of the oppressed races of his country.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 16-17.

[2] Ibid., pp. 17-18; Daniel L. Phillips, A History of Griswold, Connecticut from the Earliest Times to the Entrance of Our Country into the World War in 1917 (n.p.: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1929), pp. 121-122; and Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, September 5, 1839, p. 2.

[3] George D. Prentice, Biography of Henry Clay (Hartford: Hanmer and Phelps, 1831).

Stanton was taught that before he could be of any use to others, he had first to learn to take care of himself. Self-sufficiency was a cardinal virtue to the family. Henry was put to work in his father's factories at the age of thirteen and he earned enough money to support himself. His experience in the factories also taught him a great deal about merchandise and machinery, information that was to be useful to him when he later became a patent lawyer.[3]

---

[1] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 7, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 5, 11. Slavery was not completely abolished in Connecticut until 1848, Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 50.

[3] Stanton, op. cit., p. 19; Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 4, 1840, Theodore Stanton and Harriot S. Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 4, 5.

Young Stanton probably would have been a success in any number of pursuits but his most conspicuous talents were verbal. Apparently the opportunities for persons of his gifts were not great in eastern Connecticut. A few months before his twenty-first birthday, in 1826, Henry set out to gain a livelihood and further his education in the "far West," the Genesee country of New York State, where lived an uncle, a judge, and two sisters.[1]

The Emergence of a Moral Reformer

Stanton travelled across Long Island Sound arriving in New York City early in the morning. He rushed into Broadway to gape at the tall houses and the teeming population of this metropolis of one hundred fifty thousand people. He beheld Tammany Hall and recalled his father's stories about the Tammany Bucktails based on his reading of the National Advocate, the Tammany organ edited by Mordecai Noah. The young man gazed with wonder at the architectural marvel, City Hall.[2]

Stanton then travelled up the Hudson River to Albany. The politically-minded young man went to the capitol and listened to a debate in the Assembly chamber. The scene remained so vivid to his mind that when writing his recollections sixty years later, he could describe the colors of the clothes worn by the orators. Next Henry passed to the Senate chamber where he heard a discussion of canals involving Cadwallader Colden, Silas Wright, and Peter R. Livingston. While in Albany Stanton also saw DeWitt Clinton, then at the height of his popularity.[1] From Albany, Stanton went by stagecoach to Utica, then by packet-boat on the Erie Canal, which Henry thought the muddiest ditch he had ever seen, finally arriving in Rochester, a rapidly growing town of 3,500 people.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 21, 51; Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. The Stanton family moved to New York later the same year and Joseph Stanton died two years later in New York City. Henry may have been accompanied by his brother, Robert L. Stanton, on his trip to Rochester. So, at least, thought Robert L. Stanton's son, Robert B. Stanton. "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 15, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 22.

Probably through the influence of his uncle, Henry Stanton secured a position in the canal office in Rochester. Many eminent New York Democratic politicians gathered in the office, including William Marcy, the Comptroller, Secretary of State Azariah C. Flagg, Canal Commissioner and future Governor, William Bouck, and Henry Seymour, father of Horatio, a future Governor and candidate for the Presidency. Stanton was delighted to make the acquaintance of these men. The young clerk, listening attentively to their conversations, learned a great deal about New York and national politics.[3]

Soon after his arrival in Rochester, Stanton introduced himself to the editor of the local paper who, he later recalled, was "one of the poorest and worst-dressed men in Rochester," and lived in an obscure part of the village. Nevertheless, this enterprising journalist was already a force in New York politics.[1] Thurlow Weed's name was to become almost a synonym for political power. Weed had been de facto editor of the Telegraph since his arrival in the bustling town in 1821 and had made it a potent organ of the National Republican followers of John Quincy Adams. In 1824 he had been elected to the State Assembly as a candidate of the People's Party, a group opposed to the Albany Regency, the Van Buren wing of the Republican Party. His political influence had grown rapidly throughout the twenties so that by 1827 he was one of the two or three most powerful political figures in Western New York.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 22-23.

[2] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

[3] Ibid., p. 30.

Young Stanton with an abiding interest in politics and a natural talent for journalism, offered to submit articles for Weed's Telegraph. Weed, recognizing the ability of the budding journalist, accepted his contributions. In the fall of 1826 Henry O'Reilly began the Rochester Daily Advertizer, a Democratic paper. For many months Weed and O'Reilly were primarily engaged in firing editorial barrages at each other; Stanton served Weed as powder-monkey.[3] Weed took a fancy to his young assistant, considering him an "intelligent, bright, sagacious and efficient . . . youth of amiable character and great promise."[1] Stanton must certainly have benefited from association with the talented journalist and skillful politician.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 24-25.

[2] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed, Wizard of the Lobby (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), pp. 22-37.

[3] Stanton, op. cit., p. 26.

Stanton, like his mentor, was a supporter of John Quincy Adams. Family biases had predisposed Stanton toward Henry Clay and he naturally supported the candidate of his idol. Early in the election year of 1828, Stanton made a political speech in Rochester in behalf of the incumbent President.[2] That summer he attended the Young Men's Adams Day Convention at Utica. There he met "a sprightly young gentleman of slender frame, red hair, and freckled face," William H. Seward, who was chosen to serve as president of the convention. Two years later, Seward would be elected to the state Senate to begin an illustrious political career.[3]

In the summer of 1828, Martin Van Buren, the Democratic candidate for Governor of New York, made a tour of the state to conciliate the friends of his former opponent, DeWitt Clinton, who had died in February. The Sunday following his arrival in Rochester, Van Buren attended the wealthy and aristocratic First Presbyterian Church.

---

[1] Harriet A. Weed (ed.), Life of Thurlow Weed Including His Autobiography and a Memoir (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), I, 159.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 32-33.

[3] Ibid.; and Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 14, 1839, p. 2.

Stanton's description of Van Buren reveals his attention to detail:

> Mr. Van Buren was rather an exquisite in personal appearance. His complexion was a bright blond, and he dressed accordingly. On this occasion, he wore an elegant snuff-colored broadcloth coat with velvet collar; his cravat was orange with modest laced tips; his vest was of a pearl hue; his trousers were white duck; his silk hose corresponded to the vest; his shoes were morroco; his nicely-fitting gloves were yellow kid; his long-furred beaver hat with broad brim was of Quaker color.[1]

Stanton was impressed with Van Buren's appearance but not his politics. The decision on which of Van Buren's opponents to support in the gubernatorial contest was not easy to make. The regular candidate of the Adams men was Smith Thompson. Weed, however, was giving his full support to Solomon Southwick, the Anti-Masonic candidate.[2] Manifesting an independence which was to characterize his entire career, Stanton, who was not impressed by the Anti-Masonic movement, decided to support Thompson over Weed's candidate. As the campaign drew to a close, Stanton made several addresses in Monroe County for Adams and Thompson.[3] Southwick carried Monroe County and several others in Western New York. His vote in the state was responsible for the defeat of Thompson and the election of Van Buren. The counties on the western end of the Erie canal gave Adams his greatest support in New York, although Jackson carried the state and the nation.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 32-33.

[2] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, Thurlow Weed, Wizard of the Lobby (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1947), pp. 38-47.

[3] Stanton, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

Probably as a result of his labors for the National Republican ticket, Stanton became deputy clerk for Monroe County in January of 1829. Since the clerk lived many miles away from town, the responsibilities of that office fell largely to Stanton. During nearly three years of service in this post he witnessed many legal conflicts involving some of the most prominent New York lawyers, including a future United States President, Millard Fillmore. Stanton became interested in the law and acquired a knowledge which was to prove valuable when he entered the legal profession a decade later.[2]

Stanton was a bright, clever and confident young man, who made friends easily. He came to know the prominent men of Rochester and Albany and would undoubtedly have pursued a political career had not Charles G. Finney, the Presbyterian evangelist, diverted his enthusiasm into another channel.

Finney, who arrived in Rochester in September, 1830, was the moving spirit in a great revival that was sweeping upstate New York. He was a tall, grave man with great staring eyes, whose melodious voice held audiences spellbound. A graceful orator, Finney conducted his revivals with the utmost dignity, relying upon the persuasiveness of his arguments, his hypnotic style, and the threat of eternal punishment, to win souls to God.[1]

---

[1] Harry Price, "The Regions of New York State in the Election of 1828" (Ph.D. Dissertation, New York, Columbia University, 1953), pp. 101-103, 125. Typewritten.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 35-36.

Finney had been a practicing attorney at the time of his conversion in 1821 by George Gale, the Presbyterian minister, who later founded Oneida Institute and Knox College. He was ordained in 1824 and set out upon his remarkably successful missionary tour. To assist him, Finney formed a "Holy Band" of young men who held revival meetings and helped set ablaze central and western New York.

Finney's assault on Calvinistic determination, his insistence on the power of the will, was appealing to the optimistic and ambitious inhabitants of western New York. He asked men to renounce self-interest and practice what he called "disinterested benevolence." Personal salvation, according to the handsome and persuasive orator, was the beginning not the end of religious experience. Conversion was not escape from life but affirmation of it and acceptance of responsibility for advancing the spiritual welfare of others. Finney's doctrine gave a religious meaning to contemporary social reform and made participation a moral duty. A sincere convert to Finney's brand of Presbyterianism was obliged for his own salvation to seek out evil and dedicate his life to the reformation of the world.[2]

---

[1] James F. Johnson, "Life of Charles Grandison Finney" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse, Syracuse University, 1959), p. 165. **Typewritten.**

[2] Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District, The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 151-169; and Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 10-11.

Finney was invited in 1830 to replace Reverend Joel Parker as pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Rochester. He remained in that city from September to March during which time he preached ninety-eight sermons and succeeded in converting many of Rochester's most influential citizens. Upon his return from a few days' absence from Rochester, Henry Stanton was urged to hear Finney. The experience changed his life. He was entranced by Finney's message and his style of oratory. His description of Finney is often quoted:

> It was in the afternoon. A tall grave-looking man, dressed in an unclerical suit of gray, ascended the pulpit. Light hair covered his forehead; his eyes were of a sparkling blue, and his pose and movement dignified. I listened. It did not sound like preaching, but like a lawyer arguing a case before a court and jury. . . . The discourse was a chain of logic, brightened by felicity of illustration and enforced by urgent appeals in a voice of great compass and melody. . . . His style was particularly attractive to lawyers. He illustrated his points frequently and happily by references to legal principles. The first effect was produced among the higher classes. It began with the judges, the lawyers, the physicians, the bankers, and the merchants, and worked its way down to the bottom of society, till nearly everybody had joined one or the other of the churches controlled by different denominations. I have heard many celebrated pulpit orators in various parts of the world. Taken all in all, I never knew the superior of Charles G. Finney. His sway over an audience was wonderful. Do not infer that there was a trace of rant or fustion in him. You might as well apply these terms to heavy artillery on a field of battle. His sermons were usually an hour long, but on some occasions I have known an audience which packed every part of the house and filled the aisles listen to him without the movement of a foot for two hours and a half. In his loftiest moods, and in the highest passages of a discourse on a theme of transcendent importance, he was the impersonation of majesty and power. While depicting the glories or the terrors of the world to come, he trod the pulpit like a giant. His action was dramatic. He painted in vivid colors. He gave his imagination full play. His voice, wide in scope, mellow in pathos, now wrung in tones of warning and expostulation, and, anon melted in sympathetic accents of entreaty and encouragement. . . . His gestures were appropriate, forcible,

> and graceful. As he would stand with his face towards the side gallery, and then involuntarily wheel around, the audience in that part of the house toward which he threw his arms would dodge as if he were hurling something at them. In describing the sliding of a sinner to perdition, he would lift his finger toward the ceiling and bring it down till it pointed to the area in front of the pulpit, when half of his hearers in the rear of the house would rise unconsciously to their feet to see him descend into the pit below. Bear in mind that this was without the slightest approach to rhodomontade or exuberant excitement on the part of the orator.[1]

Stanton was immediately converted to Finney's doctrine of "disinterested benevolence" and the holy war against selfishness, the cardinal sin. He made Finney's principles his own and regarded the evangelist's oratorical style as the model after which he would fashion his talents with the spoken word. Stanton decided that he should prepare himself for the ministry. To prepare himself to enter a seminary he enrolled in the Rochester Manual Labor Institute, one of the several work-study institutions that had been set up in the East to offer a sound classical education to those young men who could not afford to attend traditional colleges. The work program also had the effect, so the religious supporters of the Institutes believed, of building moral character by occupying spare time that might otherwise be wasted in dissipation. The Satanic impulses to which young men were subjected, it was believed, could be resisted by distraction and exhaustion.

Stanton's upbringing suited him well for the Rochester Institute.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 41-42.

He had learned to value education and to work hard at physical and mental labor. Energetic and strong, Stanton found milking cows, chopping wood, growing and packaging vegetables for four hours a day no excessive burden. The typical diet of griddle cakes, rice, codfish, potatoes and milk was nutritious enough to provide energy for all of the day's activities.[1] His studies provided manna to the intellectually curious young man. He absorbed facts and ideas which he stored in his marvelous memory, while his moral convictions were strengthened by the study of religion. A preacher of renown he seemed destined to become.

It was while he was a student at the Rochester Institute that Stanton first met Theodore Weld who was a student at the Manual Labor Institute near Utica. The Connecticut-born Weld had been an orator since he was seventeen. In 1826, while a student at Hamilton College in Clinton, New York, Weld was converted by Finney and enlisted in his "Holy Band." He threw himself into the Finney mission with zeal. When his health was impaired by his vigorous labors, Weld spent several months at sea on a whaling vessel. Returning strong in body in August of 1827, he re-entered Hamilton College.[2] At the urging of a close personal friend, Charles Stuart, an English reformer, retired army officer and principal of a boy's school in Utica, Weld enrolled at Oneida Institute in Whitesboro, just outside of Utica, to prepare himself for the ministry.[1]

---

[1] James F. Johnson, "Life of Charles Grandison Finney" (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse, Syracuse University, 1959), pp. 250-251. Typewritten.

[2] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 6-18.

Weld, like Stanton, was a man of tremendous energy. He labored and studied diligently and during summer vacations traveled widely delivering lectures on temperance and collecting funds for Oneida Institute.[2]

Weld was a strong man, both physically and morally, but given to over-exertion. In personal appearance he was careless, although scrupulously clean. The severity of his facial expression belied the warmth of his nature, but his disarming smile destroyed the false illusion. Like Stanton, Weld had grown up under rigorous Puritan discipline and had been imbued with a strong sense of duty to save himself and others from the clutches of sin.[3]

Stanton was immediately attracted to the charismatic Weld, whose relationship to the younger man was simultaneously fraternal and paternal. Weld was impressed by Stanton's intelligence and commitment to moral reform. Their conversations reinforced Stanton's desire to enter the ministry. Stanton found Weld to be a powerful example of what a reformer should be. He later recalled, in a letter to Weld, "I learned more from you during the years we were together than from all other men and books."[1]

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 16-17.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 20.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

While Weld was at Oneida, Charles G. Finney brought his talents and the principles of manual labor education to the attention of the Tappan brothers, wealthy New York philanthropists. Arthur and Lewis Tappan, dry goods merchants and sponsors of such reforms as the free church movement, the American Tract Society, the American Bible Society, temperance, Sabbath observance and anti-slavery, had invited Finney to New York to preach at the Free Presbyterian Church which they had founded.[2]

Finney's doctrine of "disinterested benevolence" the Tappans accepted immediately. The combination of the Tappans and Finney was a natural one. Finney added zeal and vitality to the humanitarian reforms which they were espousing; they in turn provided immediate objectives which could be seen as steps to the millenium.[3] Finney won the Tappans over to the cause of manual labor education with the result that they formed a Society for the Promotion of Manual Labor in Literary Institutions. Lewis Tappan enrolled two of his sons in

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton (and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) to Weld, September 22 (Misdated 1848), (1850), Weld Papers, Clements Library, University of Michigan.

[2] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 24, 31; and Whitney R. Cross, The Burned-Over District, The Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950), p. 165.

[3] Cross, Burned-Over District, p. 165.

Oneida Institute and during a visit to the campus met Weld and Stanton.[1]

The Tappans learned of Weld's correspondence with Charles Stuart, who had returned to England in 1829 and was sending Weld information on the British abolition movement in which Stuart was a leading participant. The brothers were very interested in the progress of that cause and hoped to duplicate its success on this side of the Atlantic. They invited Weld to New York to talk about anti-slavery with their New York friends and they offered him a pulpit in a new free Presbyterian Church that they were establishing.[2]

Weld's presentation to the New Yorkers impressed them with his talents and with the prospects for anti-slavery agitation. An even more important result of the conference was Weld's growing awareness of the transcendent importance of the anti-slavery cause.

Refusing the offer of the church, for which he felt unprepared, Weld did accept a position as general agent of the Society for the Promotion of Manual Labor in Literary Institutions. He was assigned to visit manual labor colleges throughout the country to collect data which would be useful in establishing new institutions. Weld was also directed to select a site for a great national manual labor school which would serve as a pattern for other schools and as a center for anti-slavery activity.[1]

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 25; that Stanton and Tappan met is indicated in Lewis Tappan to Weld, October 25, 1831, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 51.

[2] Thomas, Weld, p. 25.

Weld undoubtedly told Stanton, when he returned from New York, of the intention of the Tappans to take up the anti-slavery cause in earnest and form a national society as soon as the then-pending emancipation bill passed Parliament.[2] The campaign against the most notorious of American evils offered Stanton and Weld an opportunity to put Finney's doctrine of "disinterested benevolence" to work. The abolition of slavery seemed an excellent beginning to the crusade against selfishness and the effort to achieve universal human perfection.

Both Weld and Stanton had, since they were small children, been convinced that slavery was an unmitigated evil. Weld had witnessed slavery first-hand during a lecture tour in the South in 1823. To the patriotic Stanton, slavery was a foul blot on the national character, a denial of the human equality, human dignity and the inalienability of natural rights. Moreover, it was a crime for which all Americans shared the guilt. Stantnn's loathing for human bondage had been augmented during his early days in Rochester by a thrilling denunciation of slavery delivered by the eloquent orator, Gerrit Smith. Smith, a wealthy philanthropist, had at that time advocated freeing the slaves and sending them to Africa, a solution generally accepted at the time by those who wished to end slavery.[1] Most, but not all, of the abolitionists at one time or another were enamored of the colonization scheme, believing that there was no reasonable alternative.

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 25-26, 31.

[2] Ibid., p. 25.

Weld too had been an advocate of the colonization scheme, but after his conversations with anti-colonizationist New Yorkers he began to entertain doubts about the wisdom and morality of expatriation. Although the means to be used in abolishing slavery were not decided upon, both Stanton and Weld had agreed that they must take up the cause of the oppressed Negroes. Finney's teachings had awakened the sense of duty in Stanton. The anti-slavery movement offered the vehicle through which his duty could be met.

When Weld left to begin his tour of the manual labor institutions, Stanton remained at Rochester to continue his studies. As a man of the cloth, he reasoned, he could play an important role in mobilizing public sentiment against slavery. The seminary for which Weld sought a site would offer him an opportunity to combine anti-slavery agitation with study and Stanton was eager to enter it. He wanted it to be located in Rochester. Weld, however, came to believe that the West was the "battlefield of the world," where Satan's seat was.[2] Anxious to start this section of the country on its way to conversion, Weld wanted Lane Seminary in Cincinnati to become the model institution.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 27-28.

[2] Theodore Weld to Charles G. Finney, February 28, 1832, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 66-68.

Lane had been founded in 1830, but had been unable to begin operating because of a lack of funds. When Arthur Tappan received Weld's report on the institution, he promised an income from twenty-thousand dollars for a professorship of theology if Lyman Beecher, the leading revivalist of the Congregational Church and a strong temperance and missionary man, would accept the presidency of the institution. Beecher accepted and preparations were made for opening the model institution.[2]

Stanton arranged to enter the new seminary in the spring of 1832 secure in the knowledge that Weld would enter when he had completed his manual labor duties. Weld corresponded with Stanton from Cincinnati and told him of an accident which occurred while he was crossing Alum Creek near Columbus, Ohio. The accident would have cost Weld his life if he had not been rescued from the rapids by several men who chanced to hear his barely audible cries for help.[3] Stanton regarded the accident as a message from heaven to the vigorous Weld to be more attentive to his health. He believed that the intercession of

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 41-44.

[2] Ibid., pp. 43-45.

[3] Theodore Weld to Henry B. Stanton, February 15, 1832, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 60-65.

Providence which saved Weld's life should be made known, especially since it would exalt the reforms championed by Weld. He proceeded to have an account of the incident published in the Rochester Observer. For this he was admonished by the modest Weld, who shunned the limelight.[1]

Stanton's concern with Weld's well-being was attributable not only to his warm affection for the man but also to his need for Weld to sustain his religious strength. He plaintively wrote to Weld, "Pray for me. Oh, pray for me, dear brother, I remember you. Oh, how good and kind Christ is--but I am a miserable sinner. I sometimes fear I have got no religion--but the Lord knows."[2] Stanton's lament was a sincere expression of self-doubt. He feared that without the inspiration provided by Weld he would lose the moral passion which Finney had loosed in him.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Theodore Weld, March 7, 1832, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 69-70.

[2] Ibid., p. 71.

CHAPTER II

OHIO ABOLITIONIST

Henry Stanton left Rochester for Lane in the summer of 1832 to begin his studies there and to aid in preparing the seminary for the anticipated influx of students. By August, six students from the Rochester Institute had arrived and more wanted to come. Students were pouring in from all over more rapidly than buildings could be set up to house them. Stanton wrote to Weld to complain of the intellectual and moral conditions there, particularly the dearth of competent instructors. He wanted Weld to accept a position as instructor to provide spiritual advice and to serve as a model for Stanton and the other students. He lamented, "Religion is dreadfully low among us. My own heart is a moral desolation. God grant that I may not be left utterly to myself."[1]

Weld was at the time on a trip which would ultimately cover forty-five hundred miles, mostly in the West and the South. He was observing, taking notes, delivering public addresses on manual labor and other topics, and sharing ideas with reformers whom he encountered. In October he visited Western Reserve College at Hudson, Ohio, where he conversed with the president of the institution, Charles Storrs, and two faculty members, Beriah Green and Elizur Wright. This trio had been much influenced by the idea of immediate emancipation of slavery which had reached them through the writings of William Lloyd Garrison, the New England reformer.[1] Garrison had been enlisted into the anti-slavery vanguard by the itinerant abolitionist editor, Benjamin Lundy. He had gone to Baltimore to assist Lundy in the editing of the Genius of Universal Emancipation. By 1829 Garrison had rejected the colonization scheme which Lundy had favored and had declared himself an advocate of immediate emancipation. Convicted of libel for an editorial attack upon a Newburyport ship owner engaged in shipping slaves, Garrison had been bailed out of jail by Arthur Tappan. After a short visit with his benefactor, Garrison had returned to his home state of Massachusetts and begun publishing his famous weekly paper, the first issue of which appeared in January of 1831.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton *et al.* to Theodore Weld, August 4, 1832, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 83-87.

In January of 1832, Garrison and a group of his abolitionist friends had met in the basement of the African Baptist Church on "Nigger Hill" in Boston and formed the New England Anti-Slavery Society, which designated the Liberator as its official organ. In a very short time Garrison had become the leader of the abolitionist cause in New England. His arguments, expressed in his weekly journal and in his pamphlet, Thoughts on Colonization, influenced a number of important people, including Storrs, Wright and Green.[1]

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 33-36.

Weld, confronted with the arguments for immediate abolition, first by Charles Stuart, then by the Tappans, and finally by the reformers at Western Reserve, became convinced of the soundness of the new and uncompromising anti-slavery ideas. Meanwhile, at Lane, Stanton was pondering deeply the subject of slavery.

One summer day in 1832, Stanton passed through the hall of Lane Seminary and learned from a notice on the bulletin board of the literary society to which he belonged that the question for debate that evening was to be: "If the slaves of the South were to rise in insurrection, would it be the duty of the North to aid in putting it down?" The Nat Turner Rebellion of August, 1831 which had resulted in the killing of over fifty white Virginians, had raised the spectre of the Santo Domingo slave uprisings of 1800 and spread panic throughout the South. A great deal of sympathy for Southern whites had been generated in the North by the event, forcing the postponement of the plan of New York abolitionists to form a national anti-slavery society. Even two years after the uprising, public sentiment was favorable to the Southern whites.

Stanton, whose natural sympathies were with the oppressed, believed that there could be but one answer to the question to be debated. However, when he arrived in the debating room, he found that all of the members present had arranged themselves in the affirmative half of the room! Stanton listened patiently while all of the spokesmen for the affirmative position presented their arguments. As the debate progressed on this warm summer evening, off came Stanton's coat, later his vest and finally his boots. Thus unencumbered he rose and for forty-five minutes he spoke with fervor as he delivered his first, and one of the most personally satisfying of his numerous anti-slavery speeches.[1] He succeeded, at the very least, in proving that there were two sides to the question. The subject of slavery assumed such importance among the seminarians that the debate was continued week after week, throughout the year.[2]

---

[1] Russel Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 57.

When the term ended Stanton returned to Rochester and conferred with many of his former fellow students at the Manual Labor Institute, urging them to consider entering Lane Seminary to prepare for the ministry. In the spring of 1833, Henry Stanton, his youngest brother, George, Weld and two other manual labor students, Samuel Wells and Ezra A. Poole, started out for Lane. They bought a raft for six dollars, loaded it at Olean, New York, and went down French Creek and the Allegheny River to Pittsburgh. During the trip they conversed about slavery. They stopped occasionally for supplies, prayer meetings or sleep. At Pittsburgh they took deck passage on a steamboat to

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 46-47.

[2] James Lillie, Faith and Works; or the Life of Edward Weed, Minister of the Gospel (New York: C. W. Benedict, 1853), p. 32.

Cincinnati, helped load wood, and slept on the deck so that they would have to pay no fare.[1]

Soon after their arrival, a cholera epidemic broke out, confining about thirty young men to their rooms. At the request of the faculty, a student board of health was formed to take care of the sick. Weld assumed the major responsibility for ten days, going at one time for forty-eight hours without sleep. One of the students afflicted by cholera was Henry's brother, George, who was eighteen years old. Weld called George "a young man of most extraordinary powers," and added that he had never seen his superior. George had received a religious education and had passed through three or four revivals but still, according to Weld, he "resisted the Spirit, caviled, criticized and started skeptical inquiries. . . ." George read what Weld regarded as "infidel books" and finally made a "desperate rush into infidelity." The afternoon that he was taken with the disease, Weld and Henry Stanton conferred with the physician, who told them that George had no more than two hours to live. Weld told the young man of his impending death and urged him to repent and put his faith in Christ. In rage

---

[1] Charles Beecher (ed.), Autobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), II, 314-315; Weld's account, as recorded by Beecher, places these events in 1834. This is clearly incorrect. Stanton recalled that these events occurred in 1832, Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 43-44. This, too, is incorrect since Samuel Wells did not arrive at Lane before August of 1832, see Henry B. Stanton to Theodore Weld, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 84.

George thrust Weld from him and begged to be allowed to die in peace. But Weld, who had agreed with Henry that the boy's soul must be saved, kept at the dying George, who was forced to scream to drown out Weld's words. Henry burst into tears and threw himself upon the sick lad, saying, "Oh, George, dear George, won't you listen to your brother?" The boy insisted that he only wanted to be left alone when Henry pleaded, "What shall I tell your poor mother, George?" Weld left the room for a short while. When he heard his name called out, he returned. George cried, "Dear--dear Mr. Weld, now I'll hear you. Now, I'll hear you. Oh, tell me, is there an eternal hell? Convince me by sure arguments. Oh, to be damned! to be damned! Oh, for a light! for a light! bring me a light--the light of my salvation! No, never, never, never!" George repeated the word twelve or fifteen times, tossing from side to side. Finally the tossing stopped and with a look of horror on his countenance, George died.[1]

In their abuse of George, Theodore Weld and Henry Stanton revealed that unyielding self-righteousness that was to be so characteristic of their anti-slavery activities. Some, like George, were to find their dedicated certainties quite unbearable.

Earnest discussion of the slavery question by the Lane students was promoted by the appearance of Weld. Stanton, through his own thinking and his discussions with Weld, had become convinced of the virtues of immediate emancipation. With Weld he pressed upon his fellow students at Lane the importance of the anti-slavery cause. Two significant events which occurred in 1833 gave encouragement to the efforts of the anti-slavery men at Lane.

---

[1] Theodore Weld to a member of his family, June 18, 1833, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 110-112; Charles Beecher (ed.), Autiobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), II, 315-319.

In August of 1833, after ten years of agitation, the abolitionists of England had succeeded in securing the passage of a law providing for the emancipation of the West Indian slaves. This British success encouraged the ambitious New York Committee, led by the Tappan brothers, to proceed with their plans to form a New York City Anti-Slavery Society. This was accomplished in October. With the assent of abolitionists from New England, Pennsylvania and New York a call was issued for a meeting to interested persons in Philadelphia to form a national anti-slavery society. In December of 1833 about sixty humanitarians gathered in Adelphi Hall and formed the American Anti-Slavery Society, an organization dedicated to the peaceful overthrow of the institution of slavery by moral and political action. Among the founders were Garrison, Lewis Tappan, Beriah Green, the president of Oneida Institute, Frederick A. Hinton, a Negro abolitionist of Philadelphia, Simeon Jocelyn, minister of a Negro congregation in New Haven, Samuel J. May, a Unitarian minister from Connecticut, John G. Whittier, the Quaker poet from Massachusetts, Amos Phelps, a Congregationalist clergyman from Connecticut, and Elizur Wright, professor of mathematics at Western Reserve. Arthur Tappan, who was unable to attend the convention, was elected president of the new society, a position which he held until 1840.[1]

The news from Philadelphia quickened the efforts of the Lane abolitionists to convert the entire seminary to the principles of immediate, uncompensated emancipation. Many of the students, while abhorring slavery, had nevertheless accepted the colonization scheme as the most propitious means for eradicating the evil. Stanton, Weld and other students of like mind, convinced that colonization was in practice a failure and in theory rooted in racial prejudice, were determined to hold up both modes before the students of Lane that they might contrast them and make their choices. A debate on the subject was scheduled and on February 4, the students invited the faculty to attend. The instructors met in Dr. Beecher's office to consider the invitation and decided that the discussion of the slavery question at that time was inexpedient and ought to be postponed. Although they affirmed their approval of free inquiry and animated discussion in the abstract, the instructors regarded the slavery topic as likely to stimulate excessive interest in the students, to draw their attention away from their studies, and to cause unpleasant and permanent divisions among them. Moreover, the faculty believed that discussion of such a controversial topic might result in the loss of the confidence and patronage of the community at a time when the infant institution was surrounded by theological opposition and was heavily in debt. The students, however, persevered, addressing another note to the faculty repeating their desire to engage in the discussion. The faculty responded that their desires had been made known and that they would say no more.[1]

---

[1] Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, the Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), I, 397-398.

Preparations for the debate were begun. The students who were to participate, eighteen of whom were from slave-holding families, studied the available material on the subject of slavery, including all of the issues of the African Repository, organ of the American Colonization Society, reports on the colony of Liberia, other colonization pamphlets and reports and the documents of the newly-formed American Anti-Slavery Society.[2] The students who took part in the debate were for the most part mature adults, about half of them over twenty-five years of age and a few over thirty. There were several married students and a number of college graduates among them.[3]

The two questions settled upon for the debate were: (1) "Ought the people of the slave-holding states to abolish slavery immediately?" and (2) "Are the doctrines, tendencies and measures of the American

---

[1] Reverend Sidney Strong, "The Exodus of Students from Lane Seminary to Oberlin in 1834," Papers of the Ohio Church Society, IV (1893), 5.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, March 10, 1834, Debate at the Lane Seminary (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), p. 3.

[3] Theodore Weld to James Hall, May 20, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 138.

Colonization Society, and the influence of its principal supporters such as render it worthy of the patronage of the Christian public?"[1]

Weld began the discussions, which resembled revival inquiry meetings more than a debate, and spoke for four evenings. Stanton followed him, addressing the students for two evenings. After nine sessions, each lasting two and one-half hours, a nearly unanimous acknowledge of the rightfulness of immediate emancipation was voted. Stanton thought that the evidence presented had proved beyond a doubt that the slaves felt keenly the insult and degradation heaped upon them by the whites and that they longed for freedom. The bondsmen only told their masters that they were contented with their lot because of a fear of punishment that would result from their telling the truth. The students concluded from the evidence presented by those familiar with slavery that to escape whipping for alleged disobedience, the slaves feigned ignorance, when in fact their mental faculties were no less acute than those of the whites. The students agreed that the morals of the slaves were reprehensible but they reasoned that this was the result of the treatment which they received at the hands of their masters. Moreover, the students concluded, the influence of chattel slavery on the physical, mental and moral condition of the southern whites was pernicious.[2]

Starting with the premise that all men are created equal, the

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Debate at the Lane Seminary (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), p. 3.

[2] Ibid., pp. 3-7.

Lane students had reached the conclusion that the existence of significant differences between the white and black races was a result of differential treatment. Slavery and discrimination, they reasoned, inhibited growth, and were crimes against nature and sins against God. To remove these evils was to release conditions conducive to the development of the innate talents of the Negro. Full development of God-given qualities would manifest the essential equality of all races.[1]

The notion that slavery was a sin and the slave-owner a sinner was an extremely useful argument. It made abolition a religious issue. An evil might be ignored, even by religious folk, but a sin was another matter; it had to be uprooted, and immediately. Gradual renunciation of Sin was an obvious impossibility. Moreover, what had seemed to be an almost impossible task, the overthrow of an institution interlaced with the economic and social pattern of southern life now seemed feasible. A new religious awakening, led by a man like Edwards or Finney, could sweep the nation and loose the shackles from the souls of the whites and the bodies and minds of the blacks.

Stanton was jubilant over the results of the second nine nights of the debate in which immediatism and colonization were contrasted and evaluated. The conclusion reached by the large majority of the students was that the colonization scheme was impractical, that prejudice could be conquered and that immediate emancipation was not only right but expedient. James Bradley, a Negro who had purchased his freedom, spoke for nearly two hours, and, by his very presence, Stanton thought, convinced the students that freedmen could take care of themselves and would cause no harm to the whites. It was established to the satisfaction of the students that the slaves were hostile to colonization and only consented to deportation to Liberia to escape from bondage.

---

[1] Had the abolitionists at Lane been willing to continue this line of thought, they might have reasoned that southern Whites were conditioned to accept slavery and the belief in Negro inferiority. However, had they done this, they could not have maintained that slavery was a sin, since complete determinism negates personal guilt.

The students had succeeded, to their satisfaction, in discrediting colonization as a viable scheme for solving the problems of slavery and discrimination. Immediate abolition was the desideratum. What did immediate abolition mean? The students insisted that it did not mean that the slaves should be turned loose upon the nation to roam as vagabonds, nor that they should be immediately granted all political rights and privileges. It did mean that the Negroes should be removed from the unlimited control of their masters and placed under the protection of the law, they should be employed as free laborers and "placed under a benevolent and disinterested supervision, which shall secure to them the right to obtain secular and religious knowledge, to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences, to accumulate wealth and to seek intellectual and moral elevation."[1]

---

[1] Augustus Wattles to the editor of the Western Reporter, March 6, 1834, reprinted in American Anti-Slavery Reporter, May, 1834, p. 77. The abolitionists, throughout their crusade against slavery, were vague about the stages through which the Negro should pass from slavery to full equality. They avoided particulars in order to first convince their audiences of the desirability of abolition.

The students did not expect that abolition of slavery would occur instantaneously throughout the South. What they sought was an immediate beginning and the gradual accomplishment of emancipation.

All but one of the students from the slave states joined their northern brethren in denouncing slavery and calling for its immediate annihilation. From this happy result Stanton concluded that southern minds, raised in an atmosphere of slave-holding communities, could be reached by fact and argument and convinced of the necessity for emancipation. Upon this article of faith was built the entire moral crusade against slavery. As Stanton saw it, the southerners would willingly accept rebuke and entreaty offered in a kindly manner. In his letter to the readers of Leavitt's Evangelist, Stanton commented optimistically: "Depend upon it, the people, (I speak not of politicians), the people of the south, are not devoid of reason. I know that facts and reasoning have prevailed with them; and until the truth loses its power, they will continue to prevail, overcoming prejudice, reaching the conscience, and changing the mind."[1] It was the absence of discussion and prayer on the subject of slavery, Stanton insisted, that had consigned two million men and women "to caprice, to lust, to brutality, to ignorance, to degredation, to death, to damnation."[2]

As a result of the great debate, a strong abolition society was established at Lane dedicated to approaching and convincing slaveholders that slavery was a sin. The students were careful to avow that they had no intention of stirring up slave insurrections or of advocating measures that would interfere with the rights of the states. Stanton was chosen to serve on the Board of Managers of the organization.[1] Stanton also participated in the establishment of a large and efficient organization for elevating the colored people of Cincinnati. The Lane students established a lyceum with lectures three or four times a week on a variety of subjects including grammar, geography, arithmetic and natural philosophy. They set up an evening school to teach the Negroes to read and opened a library for those who could already read. They organized Sabbath schools and Bible classes. Two of the Lane students, Augustus Wattles and Marius Robinson, left Lane to devote all of their time to a school which they had established for the free Negroes of the city.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Debate at the Lane Seminary (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), p. 6.

[2] Ibid.

Stanton and his fellow students carried on this work because of their concern with the condition of the Negroes of the city but also to illustrate what the free colored people were capable of accomplishing.[3]

---

[1] American Anti-Slavery Reporter, May, 1834, pp. 76-77; Liberator, April 12, 1834, p. 57; Theodore Weld to James Hall, May 20, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 140; and Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 72.

[2] Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834, Barnes and Dumond (eds.), Weld Letters, I, 133.

[3] Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 18, 1834, ibid., p. 135.

Slavery and prejudice were rationalized, and nurtured by the contention that the Negro was an inferior being incapable of attaining the cultural level of whites. Stanton's belief in the brotherhood of mankind under God conflicted with this premise. His observation of the free Negroes reinforced his convictions. He was, in fact, amazed that they were able to achieve anything, oppressed as they were by the discriminatory laws of Ohio. Stanton told Joshua Leavitt:

> My soul sickens as I ponder over these legalized cruelties. Is it surprising that these persons do not rise higher in the scale of wealth, intelligence, and respectability? Pressed down as they are by the whites, under such a load of prejudice, and civil and educational disabilities--and liable to be kidnaped and sold into slavery, is it not surprising that they rise at all? . . . And shall we make the present degradation of the free blacks, which is the work of our hands the premises from which to draw the conclusion, that "they can never rise in this country?"[1]

The results of the debate at Lane renewed the hope of abolitionists. An account of the great debate was published in the major anti-slavery newspapers. The eastern anti-slavery men were given notice that the cause would make headway in the West. The joyous message from Lane was that the "claims of religion and Humanity" could convince even the most skeptical.[2] Anti-slavery discussions were stimulated in other institutions despite the suppression of these discourses by the authorities; the abolitionists were convinced that Truth and the yearning for Truth could not be suppressed indefinitely.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Debate at the Lane Seminary (Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834), p. 7.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], May 3, 1834, p. 71.

Henry B. Stanton and James A. Thome, a former colonizationist from Kentucky, were selected by the Lane students to represent them at the first anniversary meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society to be held in New York City in May of 1834. At this convention, Stanton and Thome presented a firsthand account of the thrilling debate and the reassuring conclusions drawn from it.[2]

Stanton had the opportunity of conversing with the great abolitionists of the East, including Garrison, the Tappans, Joshua Leavitt and Charles Stuart, who had recently returned from England. Stanton's enthusiasm was reinforced by their resoluteness. The leading lights of abolition were likewise impressed by the intelligent young man who was as engaging in conversation as he was eloquent on a speaker's platform. At the session held on the evening of May 8, Stanton introduced a resolution affirming the doctrine that prejudice could be conquered. In speaking on behalf of his resolution, Stanton told the delegates that prejudice was the crux of the difference between abolitionism and colonization. The colonizationists maintained that public sentiment was hostile to the Negro and could not be changed. In fact, the Lane emissary asserted, the colonizationists were opinion leaders who were esponsible for the existence of the very sentiment which they claimed made immediate emancipation inexpedient. Expatriation of Negroes, Stanton insisted, was built on racial prejudice and was incompatible with the Christian belief in the brotherhood of all men. Stanton's resolution was approved and his speech well received.[1]

---

[1] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 228, n. 15.

[2] Elizur Wright to Theodore Weld, June 10, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 149; and Barnes, op. cit., p. 69.

Stanton and Thome remained in the East after the convention, conversing with abolitionists, addressing local abolition societies and acquainting all with the principles and conclusions that had been drawn by the students at Lane. They returned to Lane on July 7, 1834.[2]

Stanton, bouyant over the reception given to the Lane message he and Thome had carried to the East, was startled by the information he received when he returned to Lane. The association of Lane students with the black people of Cincinnati had caused excitement in the community and led the faculty to convene the students and urge caution. The students were told that the community would not endure what seemed to be indiscriminate mingling of blacks and whites. When the students had persisted in their humanitarian endeavors another meeting was called. The public ire had been aroused, they were told, because of a visit by several colored women to the seminary and the rumor that a

---

[1] First Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: Dorr and Butterfield, 1834), pp. 23-26.

[2] Theodore Weld to James Birney, July 8, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 124.

Lane student had been seen walking to and from the seminary with a Negro woman. The faculty had assured the students that it was not their missionary endeavors but social intercourse that gave offense. On June 16 the students had presented the faculty with a statement in which they respectfully declined to give up the practice of eating, visiting and boarding with colored families, regarding it as a surrender of principle to give way to unreasonable prejudice.[1]

The students had continued their efforts on behalf of the free Negroes. Stanton, when he returned, aided Weld, Huntington Lyman and other students who had remained on after the term had closed to teach classes in the city. He also worked on the manual labor farm, and studied, and helped to prepare pamphlets designed to spread the abolitionist message.[2]

In July the students learned of the conversion to immediate abolition of a respected southerner, James G. Birney. Birney had been born in Danville, Kentucky, the son of a Scotch-Irish immigrant who had acquired wealth and social station. He had graduated from Princeton, studied law and been elected to the Kentucky legislature. Since Kentucky was overrun with politicians, Birney moved to Huntsville,

---

[1] Sidney Strong, "The Exodus of Students from Lane Seminary to Oberlin in 1834," Papers of the Ohio Church Society, IV (1893), 6-7.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 229, n. 16; and Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 78.

Alabama, where he practiced law and was elected mayor. Greatly influenced by Weld, whom he met during the latter's sojourn in the South in 1834, Birney freed his slaves and moved back to Kentucky to become an agent of the American Colonization Society. He traveled throughout the South organizing local societies and collecting funds for that enterprise.[1]

Birney had traveled to Lane to talk with Weld after the news of the Lane debate reached him. The discussion convinced him that he should renounce colonization and join in the crusade for immediate emancipation.[2] Birney's conversion was a cause for much rejoicing among the abolitionists, who regarded this as further evidence that the doctrine of immediate emancipation was irresistible. Furthermore, since Birney was a well-respected southern gentleman, it was believed that the news of his conversion would have a salutary effect on slave-holders.

The students at Lane took up a collection among themselves to finance the publication of the letter in which Birney announced his espousal of the doctrine of immediate emancipation. Stanton was sent to Lexington, Kentucky, to supervise the publication and mailing of the Birney letter, and to carry to Birney information on the state of the anti-slavery cause in the East. Weld wrote ahead to Birney to introduce Stanton to him, saying of Stanton: "He has most fully my confidence in every respect. Talk with him just as you would with me exactly. No man among us has pondered the whole subject of slavery and Colonization more wisely, thoroughly, prayerfully or with deeper sympathy or operated with more energy, prudence and success."[1]

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 80.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 69.

Stanton attended to his southern mission with his customary efficiency and returned to Lane in mid-July. He found that relations between the Lane students and the trustees had worsened. The president of Lane, Lyman Beecher, was in the East collecting money. Public protests against the mingling of the students with the colored people of Cincinnati had led the executive committee of the board of trustees to recommend that the abolition and colonization societies be disbanded, that the subject of slavery be no longer discussed, and that all meetings, lectures and discussions should in the future receive the prior approval of the faculty. The committee also suggested that one of the professors, John Morgan, be dismissed. Morgan, a native of Ireland and graduate of Williams College, had been Stanton's instructor at Rochester Manual Labor Institute. He was extremely popular with the students and had supported their endeavors against slavery and prejudice. The committee advised that no action should be taken by the board on the proposals until the faculty was assembled. The students, excited by the ominous suggestions, expected that Dr. Beecher would rectify matters when he returned.[1] The committee wrote to Beecher in mid-September, telling him that many of the best citizens in the community were looking upon the seminary as a nuisance and that the activities of the students were fostering a spirit of insubordination.[2] Weld and Asa Mahan, a trustee favorable to the cause of the students, also contacted Beecher and urged him to hurry back to Lane. Beecher did not hasten, however, and on October 6, the trustees met and by a vote of 14-3 ratified the action of their executive committee, instructing the faculty to enforce the new rules. They also added a provision that any students might be expelled from the institution whenever the executive committee thought it necessary to do so. Mahan told Weld that he would undoubtedly be expelled and that perhaps James Thome and Henry B. Stanton would be expelled also.[3]

---

[1] Theodore Weld to James G. Birney, July 14, 1834, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 127.

On October 17, the faculty of Lane passed a resolution saying that they found

> associations for social public action, too absorbing for health, and the most favorable prosecution of study, and bearing upon a divided and excited community, and touching

---

[1] Sidney Strong, "The Exodus of Students from Lane Seminary to Oberlin in 1834," Papers of the Ohio Church Society, IV (1893), 7-8.

[2] Charles Beecher (ed.), Autobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864), II, 245.

[3] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 84; Theodore Weld to Birney, October 6, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 140.

> subjects of great national difficulty, and high political interest, and conducted in a manner to offend needlessly public sentiment, and to commit the seminary and its influences, and this according to the unregulated discretion of the students, and in opposition to the advice of the faculty. . . .[1]

The statement had been signed by President Beecher and two faculty members; Beecher's return had not healed the breach. Many abolitionists believed that he had been privy to the passing of the resolutions by the trustees and that he had acted in a disgraceful manner throughout the proceedings.[2]

Stanton and his fellow students were adamant. The young scholars averred that they were opposed to prejudice and pride of caste and said that in their endeavors they were following the example of Jesus. They told the faculty, "It is fundamental to our principles to treat men according to their character without respect to condition or complexion."[3]

At the opening of the fall term, the students assembled in the chapel at Lane and sent a committee to ask the faculty to meet with them to explain the new code. At the meeting the students asked whether they were to be allowed to discuss the new rules. Refused permission to do this, they then asked if they could discuss the propriety of remaining at Lane. This too was refused. One of the leading students then rose and declared that their only remaining power was to signify whether they wished to remain with the institution. Stanton with about half of the student body withdrew immediately. By the time the semester was in full swing only seven of the one hundred students who had attended Lane remained.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], November 8, 1834, p. 178.

[2] Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, December 6, 1834, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. The "Jr." attached to Wright's name for part of his life is omitted completely in this paper since he is the only Elizur Wright referred to. The Liberator [Boston], January 3, 1835, p. 3.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], January 17, 1835, p. 10.

Shortly after the withdrawal of the students, the faculty of Lane issued a report in support of the action of the trustees. Included in this report was a censure of Weld by Beecher. Weld was blamed for originating and continuing all of the difficulties. Beecher said that the leader of the students had been denied the "early guidance and subordination which might have qualified his mind to act safely by consultation in alliance with other minds, instead of relying with a perilous confidence in its own sufficiency."[2]

Stanton was angered by the report which, he said was packed with "falsehood and sophisms." The premise upon which the faculty reasoning was based, Stanton believed, was "prejudice against color, and a denial of the doctrine that men ought to be treated according to their character irrespective of color." He thought that the students should reply to the faculty report.[1] Weld agreed and authored a report explaining the students' view of the proceedings. Stanton and fifty other of the Lane "rebels" signed the document, which received wide circulation in the anti-slavery papers. In it Weld claimed that free discussion was not only a right, it was a duty, and it was essential for eliciting truth and detecting fallacy. He declared that the "exciting nature" of a question was not sufficient reason for stifling discussion, and that freedom of speech was a nullity if public sentiment could dictate what subjects were proper to discuss. Agreeing with Stanton that racial prejudice was at the root of the faculty argument, Weld charged that the board of trustees had acted on unsubstantiated rumor in making most of its charges; no neglect of study had, in fact, resulted from the anti-slavery activities of the students, and no animosity had been aroused among the students. None of the Lane students, Weld pointed out, were aware that any of their number had walked with colored girls on the public streets. The reason that the students refrained from so doing, Weld explained, was not from any belief that the act was wrong but because

---

[1] Benjamin Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 84-85; Eliza Wigham, The Anti-Slavery Cause in America and Its Martyrs (London: A. W. Bennett, 1863), pp. 24-25; and Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), p. 230, n. 19.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 187n.

> we are, and have always been, at an equal remove on the one hand, from that ostentatious display of superiority to opinion which would induce a vaporing bravado to strut before the public eye, saying, "come see my zeal for an equality of color"; and, on the other hand, from that compound of pride, prejudice and scorn, which would either

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton *et al.* to Theodore Weld, January 8, 1835, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 187-188.

> blush with shame or redden with rage, to sit at the same table, kneel at the same altar, occupy the same seat at church, or board in the same family, with worth, respectability, and virtue, "if guilty of a skin not colored like its own."[1]

The statement was typical of Weld and representative of the views of the students who withdrew from Lane.

After their departure from Lane, Henry B. Stanton, Huntington Lyman, Soreno Streeter, William T. Allan, James Thome, George Whipple and other former students established their own little seminary at Cumminsville, Ohio, six miles from Cincinnati. Weld drew drafts on Arthur Tappan for their support. Salmon P. Chase, a young Cincinnati attorney who had been stirred by the anti-slavery endeavors of the students, persuaded his brother-in-law, James Ludlow, to allow the students to use a large house which Ludlow owned. There, with the assistance of Professor John Morgan and a young doctor named Gamaliel Bailey, the students taught themselves religion, while at the same time continuing their instruction of the Negroes of Cincinnati.[2]

The students planned to establish a permanent seminary at Cumminsville. Arthur Tappan offered them $5000 to endow a professorship. They were about to accept this offer when they were visited by John

---

[1] "Statement of Reasons Which Have Induced the Students of Lane Seminary, to Dissolve their Connections with That Institution," The Liberator [Boston], January 10, 1835, pp. 5-6.

[2] James Lillie, Faith and Works, or the Life of Edward Weed, Minister of the Gospel (New York: C. W. Benedict, 1853), p. 33; and Wilbur G. Burroughs, "Oberlin's Part in the Slavery Conflict," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Publications, XX (1911), 269-334.

J. Shippherd, a minister from Oberlin, an institution then consisting of a few crude shacks a few miles from Western Reserve College. Shippherd asked the students to enroll at Oberlin. They agreed to do this if they would be allowed to choose the president and faculty and establish the rules of the institution. They insisted that Asa Mahan, the trustee who had left Lane over the dispute, Weld and Morgan be appointed to the faculty and that Negroes should be admitted to the student body.[1]

Stanton wrote to Weld to beg him to teach the course in mental and moral science and if possible to induce James G. Birney to become a lecturer on rhetoric and law. With such men on the faculty, Stanton thought, men, money and reputation would accrue to the institution.[2] When Weld indicated that he did not think that he would be able to accept such a position, he suggested that Charles G. Finney be appointed to the faculty. Stanton wrote a long letter to Finney asking him to join the Oberlin faculty. Employing his talent for persuasion, Stanton depicted for Finney the "impenitent West" which was "rushing to death, unresisted and almost unwarned." Antinomianism, Campbellitism, Universalism, Catholicism and infidelity, Stanton lamented, were undermining the foundation of pure religion. Only a powerful religious revival could stem the tide. To have such a revival, ministers had to be trained, and since instructors were almost entirely responsible for molding the character of students, it followed that the needs of the West, and therefore the country and the world, cried out for Finney to come as an instructor to Oberlin.[1] Arthur Tappan who donated a large sum of money and canvassed his rich friends for more, also begged Finney to accept a faculty position, and the great evangelist consented.[2]

---

[1] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 74-76.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Theodore Weld, January 22, 1834, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 202-203.

Weld in the meantime was busy with the abolitionist cause in Ohio. The brilliant lecturer, who had accepted a position as agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society after his departure from Lane, visited some forty towns and villages in Ohio and established many local abolition societies. He went to Zanesville to make arrangements for the formation of a state society, but the town was hostile and would allow him no place to lecture. He was given one public room in which to lecture in Putnam, across the river from Zanesville, but a mob broke the windows and doors, tore off the gate and attacked Weld with stones and clubs when he came out. Nevertheless Weld went ahead with his plan to hold a state meeting there.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Finney, January 10, 1834, Charles Finney Papers, Oberlin College.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 74-76.

[3] Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, March 9, 1836, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 270-271.

Stanton enrolled as a delegate from Hamilton County at the Putnam meeting which began on April 22. A group of boys assembled in front of the meeting house, made a good deal of noise, threw several stones and broke the windows. A mob gathered outside while the meeting was in progress, but no further violence occurred.[1] Inside the meeting house one hundred fifty delegates from all areas of the state, from all of the major Protestant denominations and from both political parties met. Stanton was elected as one of the two secretaries of the convention and was appointed to the committee on the internal slave trade. This committee issued a report describing and condemning that trade and calling for an intensified petition campaign urging the abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the national capital.[2]

Stanton listened attentively to a report on the progress of Ohio Negroes. He told Garrison, and through Garrison's Liberator, the leading abolitionists of the East: "Facts were adduced, demonstrating that the colored man is as capable of physical, intellectual and moral elevation, as any other class of citizens; and that, were the prejudices and civil and educational disabilities which now tread them in the mire removed, they would rise to industry, intelligence, virtue and consequent respectability."[3]

---

[1] Joseph A. Dugdale to The Liberator [Boston], May 16, 1835, p. 77.

[2] Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam on the Twenty-Second, Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth of April, 1835 (n.p.: Beaumont and Wallace, 1835), pp. 43-45.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Garrison, April 27, 1835, The Liberator [Boston], May 9, 1835, p. 74.

As the result of the three day convention at Putnam a strong anti-slavery society was formed, dedicated to the "ceaseless proclamation of truth upon the whole subject" of slavery. The Declaration of Sentiments signed by Stanton and his fellow delegates proclaimed the goal of immediate emancipation, defined as it had been by the Lane students. The delegates pledged to implore the church to purge itself of slavery, to petition the government for the redress of those grievances within the scope of the Constitution, and to spread their message north and south that slavery was a sin, and that free labor was superior to slave labor. The signers of the Declaration affirmed their intention to buy the produce of free labor in preference to that of slave labor.[1]

At the conclusion of the meeting Stanton's motion that all anti-slavery societies in Ohio be requested to become auxiliaries to the state society was carried. The intention was to build a strong network of organizations, the work of which would be planned and guided by the state group. Stanton and six other delegates were selected to be representatives of the Ohio society at the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society to be held in New York in May of 1835.[2]

While Stanton headed for New York about twenty of the Lane rebels enrolled at Oberlin, which, after a protracted debate, had opened its doors to all qualified students, regardless of race. Although Stanton was not in what Lyman Beecher caustically called the "muddy stream of vinegar that went trickling down to Oberlin,"[1] he planned to join his comrades there upon his return from the East.

---

[1] "Declaration of Sentiments of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society," The Liberator [Boston], May 16, 1835, p. 78.

[2] Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam on the Twenty-Second, Twenty-Third and Twenty-Fourth of April, 1835 (n.p.: Beaumont and Wallace, 1835), p. 46.

---

[1] Paxton Hibben, Henry Ward Beecher, An American Portrait (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), p. 69.

CHAPTER III

ANTI-SLAVERY AGENT

Success in addressing anti-slavery groups caused Stanton to give up his plan to continue his studies in preparation for the ministry. Instead he accepted a position as agent for the American Anti-Slavery Society and toured the eastern part of the United States making converts to abolitionism, organizing local societies and collecting funds. An engaging personality, quick wit and a captivating oratorical style earned Stanton a reputation as one of the liminaries of the anti-slavery enterprise. Stanton's efforts were of inestimable value in constructing the network of self-sustaining local societies upon which the abolitionist cause rested. Energetic and indefatigable, Stanton assisted greatly in converting the egalitarian ideology into a dynamic movement.

Stanton arrived in New York in May of 1835 to act as a delegate to the annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society. These get-togethers were exciting to the abolitionists who participated in them. An anniversary meeting would be usually held first. This was opened by the President, Arthur Tappan throughout the 1830's. A prayer was said followed by a reading from Scripture. An abstract of the annual report of the society, prepared by the Executive Committee was then read and usually approved immediately. A few resolutions would be made and spoken to before adjournment at noon. The business meetings would begin the same afternoon. After prayer and scripture reading, the roll would be taken and officers and committees selected. From then until the concluding session two or three days later, the delegates would hear and vote on resolutions delivered and supported by individuals or by committees.

In the early years of the organization a unanimity of sentiment characterized the meetings. Motions were rarely opposed and almost never defeated. Some of the resolutions were statements of conviction, or of abolitionist dogma, while others were plans of action.

The oratory that accompanied the resolutions gave the speakers intellectual and verbal exercise, while the listeners were usually captivated by the talents of the orators. A spirit of camraderie and mutual dedication marked the gatherings, reinforcing conviction, bolstering fortitude and imbuing the abolitionists with the sense of religious mission necessary for their endurance in the hostile environments to which they would return.

Stanton's pride in the righteousness of the cause he espoused and in his own splendid oratorical talents was augmented by his experiences at the gatherings. His sense of worthiness was reinforced as awe-struck audiences attended his every word. His associates in the cause regarded Stanton as a natural leader. While the adulation accorded him fostered a degree of conceit, the sanctity of the cause seemed to mitigate the evil.

Respect for the capabilities of the young reformer was evidenced in his selection as one of the three assistant secretaries to the 1835 meeting. He was also chosen one of the delegates to the New England

Anti-Slavery Society's Convention to be held in May of the same year.[1] At the conclusion of the New York meeting, Stanton made several anti-slavery speeches in New York and Philadelphia. He then headed for New England, making speeches at Providence, Boston, and Concord, New Hampshire. In his speeches, Stanton flailed the concept of gradual emancipation, which he classed among the plans of the devil. Slavery was a sin, Stanton told his audiences and there was no gradual repentance of sin. Stanton made a powerful impression on his auditors. "Mr. S., though young, displayed shining talents and a powerful mind," wrote a correspondent of the Fall River Recorder.[2]

At the New England convention, which began on May 27th, Stanton introduced and defended a resolution condemning the people of the free states for their apologies of the sin of slave-holding. Although the meeting was altogether successful, The Liberator grieved that many diamonds from the speeches of George Thompson, Birney, Orange Scott and Stanton had been lost because no first-rate reporter was at the convention.[3]

Stanton's success on the platform led a committee of the national organization to offer him a commission as a full-time traveling agent for the society. Stanton had the choice of putting his talents to immediate use in the field or of returning to Oberlin to complete his education for the ministry. Weld's prior acceptance of an agency undoubtedly influenced Stanton's decision. He accepted the offer and became the tenth full-time agent of the American Anti-Slavery Society.

---

[1] Second Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1835), pp. 23, 31.

[2] May 28, 1835, reprinted in The Liberator [Boston], June 6, 1835, p. 90.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], May 30, 1835, p. 86.

The agency system was to be the key to the success of the anti-slavery crusade. The movement drew its strength from the local organizations which it was the prime duty of agents to establish. An agent was expected to familiarize himself with all of the aspects of the anti-slavery argument and to be prepared to answer all objections that might be raised to immediate abolition. He would then travel from town to town identifying leaders among the local abolitionists and organizing societies. He would deliver lectures aimed at swelling the ranks of abolitionists and inspiring those already committed or partially committed to the cause. He would arrange for the circulation of published anti-slavery literature and ask for donations.

The life of an agent was arduous. Given a small stipend, about eight dollars a week, by the national society, he was expected to secure food and lodging in the homes of abolitionists, often sympathetic clergymen. An agent would usually remain in a village a day or two, but often he would speak in two towns within one day. Travel was slow and exhausting and the strain of lecturing sometimes five or six hours a day took its toll of even the most vigorous of men. Agents suffered ridicule and physical violence at the hands of incendiaries motivated by misguided patriotism or a proclivity for rowdyism. Many agents were unable to survive the rigor and either resigned or were removed by the national society.

Stanton had all of the attributes required for success. He was intelligent, quick-witted, determined, vigorous, intrepid and undaunted. Next to Weld he was the most successful of agents and in length of service he even surpassed the master. His first assignment was to spread the abolitionist message and organize local societies throughout the state of Rhode Island.[1] Birney and Theodore S. Wright, clergyman of a Presbyterian church in New York, accompanied Stanton, who delivered his first speech in the church of Ray Potter, a Baptist minister of Pawtucket and one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society. The address was well received. Potter accompanied Stanton through many Rhode Island communities in each of which Stanton delivered five or six speeches and organized local societies.[2]

Stanton's efforts were remarkably successful in winning adherents to the cause and in organizing strong local societies.[3] By the end of

---

[1] "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," June 5, 1835, p. 26, Boston Public Library.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], June 6, 1835, p. 89; Ray Potter to William L. Garrison, July 6, 1835; and ibid., July 18, 1835, p. 114.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], July 18, 1835, p. 114; Elizur Wright to Theodore Weld, September 16, 1835, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 232-233; William Lloyd Garrison to George Benson, September 4, 1835, William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library; The Liberator [Boston], December 26, 1835, p. 205; Theodore D. Weld to James G. Birney, December 22, 1835, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 290.

1835, Rhode Island had been sufficiently organized to allow the anti-slavery men to plan a convention for the following February to establish a state society. Before the convention a last minute drive to win over the state's Congregationalists was made. Stanton made an effort to secure the help of Amos A. Phelps, a Congregationalist minister from Connecticut, who was one of the society's most effective agents.[1] Phelps was unable to go to Rhode Island but Charles Burleigh, another effective anti-slavery orator, accepted Stanton's call to lecture in Rhode Island before convention time.[2] Stanton and Burleigh together tackled the big cities of Providence and Newport with the dual purpose of swelling the ranks for the state meeting and turning these summer resorts into hotbeds of abolitionism. Since southern slave-holders frequented the Rhode Island towns during the summers, Stanton wanted to create a "moral atmosphere so hot, that next summer, it will melt or consume them."[3]

The success of the convention to be held in Providence was crucial, especially since the Rhode Island legislature was considering a bill to suppress free discussion and crush the anti-slavery societies. Pressure brought at the proper moment, Stanton believed, would prevent this bill from being enacted. One state at least was needed, Stanton told Phelps, "from which we may thunder down upon the North and South."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835, Amos A. Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] Charles C. Burleigh to Garrison, December 29, 1835, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835, Amos A. Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

The state convention which met on February 2 and 3, 1836 at the capital city was a triumph. Nearly five hundred delegates representing all parts of the state launched the Rhode Island Anti-Slavery Society. Stanton, who was most responsible for the favorable outcome, served as corresponding secretary of the convention. This large and enthusiastic gathering may have determined the fate of an anti-abolitionist bill in the state legislature. The proposed legislation was defeated largely through the efforts of two members from Providence.[2] After the convention, Stanton, in the company of Weld's close friend, Charles Stuart, Charles C. Burleigh, and William Goodell, toured the state answering all objections to the doctrine of immediate emancipation.[3]

When the agency committee in New York decided that abolitionism in Rhode Island would be able to stand on its own feet, Stanton was instructed to join Phelps in Connecticut to organize a state society there.[4] Rhode Island abolitionists objected to the loss of Stanton's inestimable services and were mollified only when William Goodell was assigned as agent to that state.[1] Stanton, however, was reluctant to venture into Connecticut until he had had the opportunity to consult with Weld, particularly on the Bible argument against slavery upon which he believed himself ill-prepared. Stanton wrote to Phelps of his intention to visit Weld in central New York. He explained that the agency committee had decided that the formation of the state society in Connecticut could be postponed until after the next national meeting. More expedient for the present, Stanton believed, was laboring in those parts of the state which the southerners would visit in the summer in order to "get the water hot for them." Stanton suggested that Charles Burleigh be secured immediately to help in this endeavor and that the agents in that state concentrate upon the easy regions. He promised to return in a few weeks, possibly with Weld, to tackle Hartford County, believed to be the most difficult area to convert to abolition.[2] Stanton secured the approval of this course from Elizur Wright, the corresponding secretary of the national organization, and headed to Utica to meet his great friend.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, December 18, 1835, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] William Goodell, Slavery and Anti-Slavery, A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres, with a View of the Slavery Question in the United States (New York: the author, 1855), p. 420.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], February 20, 1836, p. 31.

[4] "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the AASS," February 10, 1836, p. 39; and Elizur Wright to Amos A. Phelps, February 13, 1836, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

Stanton arrived in Utica on March 1, and ascertained that Weld had succeeded admirably in that region with his speeches on the Bible view of slavery, "bringing out in their majesty and strength, those great moral truths, which form the basis of our glorious cause." As a result of Weld's labors, six hundred persons had joined the Utica Anti-Slavery Society, a majority of them from "the genuine nobility of that city--the bone and marrow of Utica." How different from the situation in 1835 when Utica mobs had broken up the convention called to organize a state anti-slavery society.[1]

---

[1] "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," February 24, 1836, p. 40, Boston Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, February 24, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Elizur Wright to Amos A. Phelps, February 24, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; and Lewis Tappan to Garrison, February 25, 1836, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

Weld had just finished his labors and was preparing to move on to Rochester when Stanton arrived. Stanton apologized to Phelps for not being able to return to Connecticut right away, but he thought it best to accompany Weld, "recruiting, sharpening my armour and replenishing my stock of ammunition." This also allowed Stanton to re-visit the Genessee country where he had lived. Stanton consoled Phelps by explaining that the postponement of the formation of a Connecticut society would mean that a more efficient organization, one not dependent upon the national society would result.[2]

The agency committee approved a request by Weld to allow Stanton, who was suffering from a severe inflammation of the throat, to remain with him. Elizur Wright asked Weld to write to the New York office of Stanton's doings and to have Stanton write of Weld's doings. This was necessary, Wright explained, because of the modesty of both men.[1] Stanton listened attentively and absorbed Weld's vindication of the Old and New Testaments from the charge that they sanctioned slavery. Stanton informed Garrison that Weld had succeeded completely in refuting the "blasphemous doctrine that God has ever sanctioned the inbruting of his own image." As a result of Weld's persuasive speeches between eight and nine hundred members were added to the local anti-slavery societies in the Rochester area. "The farmers,--the Independent working men are with us when they understand us," Stanton told Garrison.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Garrison, March 2, 1836, The Liberator [Boston], March 12, 1836, p. 42.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, March 5, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

When Stanton had recovered from his throat ailment and Weld had finished his mission in the western part of the Empire State, Stanton made a short tour in Livingston County, New York.[3] By April, 1836, his thoughts turned to the anniversary meeting to be held in New York the following month. He urged Phelps, then in New York to help out, to attempt to secure a "heavy man," on the order of Gerrit Smith for a speaker. Stanton thought that possibly the New Hampshire clerical abolitionist, James G. Woodbury, might be enlisted. Mindful of the influence of an important name, Stanton asked rhetorically: "Being a Jackson man, and the brother of the Secretary of the Treasury, would he not add weight?"[1]

---

[1] Elizur Wright to Theodore Weld, March 24, 1836, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 279-280; and "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," April 5, 1836, p. 43, Boston Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Garrison, April 6, 1836, The Liberator [Boston], April 16, 1836, p. 62.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, April 13, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

The convention assembled on the morning of May 10. Stanton was listed as a delegate from Ohio. Since Stanton's experiences as an agent had reinforced his conviction that the role assumed by the churches would determine the fate of slavery, he introduced a resolution which was approved, asking the Christian churches to pass resolutions condemning slavery as a sin. He called upon the churches to suspend any member who was guilty of selling slaves, offering rewards for the capture of runaways, or emancipating his bondsmen without compensating them for their years of unrequited toil. The churches were requested to censure any member who offered freedom to his slaves on the condition that they leave the country or who apprehended and returned a runaway slave or who left slaves in his will.[2]

Since Stanton had ascertained that much of the opposition to abolitionism had come from people afraid of the consequences of freeing the slaves, Stanton moved that two agents be sent to the West Indies to report on the condition of the colored people there. Stanton and his fellow abolitionists regarded the West Indies as the proving ground of their beliefs that no dangers need be anticipated from abolition and that freed Negroes would assume a productive and non-destructive position in society.[1] The report that James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball prepared as a result of the visit that resulted from the passage of Stanton's resolution was published and widely circulated by the American Anti-Slavery Society.[2] It concluded that immediate emancipation had created no disorder, that it had proved superior to the apprenticeship system and that preparation for freedom was unnecessary.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, April 13, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library. The report of the convention mentions no major speech as having been delivered.

[2] Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), p. 29; and The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87.

The delegates to the Convention learned of the progress of the cause during the year. Over one million items of anti-slavery literature had been printed and distributed. Three hundred twenty-three new societies had been formed to make the total of local organizations five hundred twenty-three. The total membership in all anti-slavery societies approximated sixty thousand. This meant that there was one avowed abolitionist for every two hundred fifty Americans. This was a small army but a determined one.[3]

On the third and final day of the meeting, Stanton introduced a resolution declaring that the sympathy manifested by this country for the Texans showed, not a love of liberty, but the pro-slavery spirit of the people of the United States and that this sympathy should be turned into the strongest moral reprobation.[1] Stanton anticipated that Texas, as new ground for the expansion of slavery, was to prove a vexatious subject and that it was the responsibility of the abolitionists to fight the menace it presented at every turn.

---

[1] Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), pp. 29-30.

[2] James A. Thome and J. Horace Kimball, Emancipation in the West Indies, A Six Months Tour in Antigua, Barbadoes and Jamaica, in the Year, 1837 (New York: American Anti-Slavery Society, 1838).

[3] Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society, pp. 33-35.

Stanton made a profound impression upon his listeners. Garrison commented to his wife, "Stanton has reflected great credit upon himself and his cause by his eloquent speeches."[2]

The delegates to the national convention again chose Stanton as a delegate to the New England convention where he spoke effectively. The Daily Advocate expressed the opinion that Stanton, in his handling of the slavery issue, was second only to George Thompson, the talented British abolitionist, in his powers of appeal on the subject.[3] The Lynn Record reported

> Mr. Stanton is a young man, of very youthful and prepossessing appearance, of rare talents, and of surpassing eloquence. The audience were evidently delighted as well as convinced and instructed by the arguments and eloquence of this accomplished young orator. . . . [Stanton] continued to hold that large and crowded meeting enchained in admiration and delight for nearly an hour, by one of the most impassioned strains of eloquence ever heard. At times, every heart seemed melted with pity; at other times the fancy of the speaker would break forth and flash with wit, as chaste as it was cuttingly

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87.

[2] William Lloyd Garrison to Helen Garrison, May 25, 1836, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87.

> sarcastic and severe. At the close there was a sudden burst of applause, the only instance of the kind we witnessed through the day.[1]

The twin evils of slavery and race prejudice were pommeled by Stanton at the Young Men's Anti-Slavery Convention which met in Boston while the New England meeting was still in progress.[2] On the last day of May, Stanton journeyed to Garrison's home town, Newburyport, to attend a meeting of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Society, but the Temple Street Meeting House which the abolitionists had been given permission to use was closed to them by a vote of the parish.[3] The following Sunday, June 5, Stanton made use of the lessons he had learned from Weld and lectured in defense of the New Testament. The Liberator found Stanton's argument entirely convincing.[4] Debora Weston, one of the first of the female abolitionists from Massachusetts, had attended the Congress Hall meeting and thought Stanton's lecture "very good indeed, rather too violent at times, but the reasoning excellent and original."[5]

Speaking to an audience of ladies two days later, Stanton directed his attention to the objections to abolitionism "current in the parlors and drawing-rooms at the North." They revealed, Stanton maintained, a "heartlessness and depravity not surpassed by the slaveholders." Debora Weston, again in attendance, said she had never heard Stanton speak better. Stanton ridiculed the idea that slaves were lazy. "Tried by this rule," he queried, "what would become of the white lady of the South, who does nothing but pull the bell-rope to call the servant to come and dress her, bring her a glass of water, or shut down the window by her side?" Stanton pointed out the fallacy in the contention that slaves were ignorant and, therefore, should not be educated and he refuted the assumption that the slaves were contented with their lot and would not be able to care for themselves if freed.[1] Stanton appealed to the ladies to do their part, laboring, writing and praying in behalf of the oppressed women. Although Debora Weston thought that Stanton used the word "ladies" a bit too much, she noted that the effect of his speech on the assembled females was great. Fifty women joined the ladies' society, many of them becoming life members. After the meeting Stanton attended a party and dominated the conversation, describing the events at Lane Seminary and Weld's escape from death.[2]

---

[1] Cited in The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], June 4, 1836, p. 91.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], June 11, 1836, p. 95.

[5] Debora Weston to Anne Warren Weston, June 6 and 7, 1837, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

Stanton found the people of Massachusetts quite receptive to his message, but much as he would have liked to remain there, or to yield to the pleas for his return to Rhode Island, duty called in western New York.[1] Stanton went west to fill the void created by Weld's departure and spoke and wrote on behalf of the cause. One of his letters, to students at Oberlin College, which urged agitation of the slavery question, brought criticism from an unexpected source. Charles G. Finney complained to Weld that Stanton's letter was too extreme and that Stanton deserved severe castigation. "My soul abhors such a spirit," Finney wrote, "it is anything but opposition to slavery. It is the spirit and language of the slave-driver." Finney was perturbed over the direction which the immediate abolitionists were taking. He told Weld that the country was going fast toward civil war and would arrive there "unless your mode of abolitionizing the country be greatly modified." Finney wanted to make abolition the appendage of a general revival of religion and he objected to the plan of putting abolition first.[2]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 11, 1836, p. 95; and Debora Weston to Anne Warren Weston, June 6 and 7, 1836, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] Debora Weston to Anne Warren Weston, June 6 and 7, 1836, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

Abolitionism, the offspring of the religious revival, had incorporated many of the methods of the evangelists, but had asserted its independence. The renunciation of the great sin was to be given priority. Finney had inspired the movement, but its direction would be determined by Weld and his cohorts.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William M. Chace, June 13, 1836, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library; and Elizur Wright to Beriah Green, July 19, 1836, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Charles G. Finney to Theodore Weld, July 21, 1836, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 318-320.

The cause suffered a severe blow when Weld, because of poor health, was compelled to retire from the field in the summer of 1836. The Executive Committee of the national organization directed him to train seventy agents who would be able to continue the work that he and Stanton had begun.[1] Stanton assisted Weld in the selection of agents in the fall of 1836. He and Whittier made a tour of colleges and theological schools in search of promising recruits.[2] The candidates were then put through an intensive training program in New York under the direction of Weld, who had the assistance of Stanton, Garrison, Beriah Green, Charles Stuart and Simeon Jocelyn. The Seventy became the driving force of abolitionism. Although the economic woes of the late 1830's reduced the number of agents employed in the field, those who served made substantial contributions to the cause by organizing societies and spreading the anti-slavery message.[3]

In the summer of 1836 Stanton bent his efforts toward collecting funds for the national society of which he had recently been appointed financial agent. He was very successful in this capacity. Two weeks in June in New York saw Stanton, with the help of Gerrit Smith, collect eighteen hundred dollars for the state society. He then headed for New England. Two days at Fall River, Massachusetts, including West India Emancipation Day, netted between four and five hundred dollars for the cause. During the period from July 29 to August 11, Stanton, speaking at least once and often twice a day, collected $2,250.[1] Lectures in New Hampshire, Maine and Massachusetts during three weeks in September brought in over $1,150. Stanton was the most consistently successful money raiser for the anti-slavery cause. In addition he made new converts, helped found new societies, discovered new agents and provided an inspiration to abolitionists wherever he spoke. He constantly reminded his brethren of their duty and pointed out the activities which they should follow to contribute to the achievement of their common objectives. For example, at the Rhode Island society's annual meeting in 1836, Stanton chastized the people of that state for voting for law makers who refused to take steps to abolish the abominable slave trade. Stanton told his listeners that they had a positive role to play in the holy war against slavery. They were morally obliged to support the abolitionist presses, to give financial aid to the anti-slavery agents in the field, and to petition the legislature on anti-slavery measures and to vote wisely. Stanton particularly wanted the young people to come forward in the movement.

---

[1] Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 184.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 56-57; and Samuel T. Pickard (ed.), Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1907), I, 249-250.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], November 26, 1836, p. 191; and Dumond, op. cit., p. 185.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], August 13, 1836, p. 131.

Anticipating a long struggle he predicted that slavery would be extinguished "when the present race of juveniles is on the stage." Realizing that equality in education was essential for the moral and intellectual advancement of youth of both races, Stanton spoke out strongly against the establishment of separate schools for the two races. Schools should be open to all regardless of race, he told the Rhode Island delegates.[1]

In December of 1836, Stanton teamed up with Amos Dresser, the former Lane student who had received twenty lashes with a heavy cowskin whip in Nashville the previous year for having had abolitionist newspapers in his possession.[2] A fascinating pair they were: Stanton, tall, rangy, self-assured, eloquent and witty; and the soft-spoken Dresser, "a small delicate, pretty looking young man, rather fair with the cunningest little black eyes, you ever saw," as Anne Warren Weston described him.[3] They spoke on the Bible, the Constitution and the colonization scheme.[4] Stanton challenged the minds of his listeners; Dresser wrung their hearts.[5] The Spectator claimed that the Stanton-

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], November 19, 1836, p. 185.

[2] "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," December 6, 1836, Boston Public Library.

[3] Anne W. Weston to Debora Weston, January 30, 1837, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to William Lloyd Garrison, April 24, 1837, The Liberator [Boston], April 28, 1837, p. 71.

[5] C. P. Grosvenor to Samuel J. May, January 5, 1837, May Papers, Boston Public Library.

Dresser team was carrying all before them in Massachusetts. The Emancipator, organ of the national society, was more restrained. It was satisfied with what it called good progress.[1]

Stanton attended conventions, big and small, usually playing a conspicuous role in writing, introducing and speaking to resolutions and serving on important committees. The demand for his oratorical services was incessant. He had become a masterful orator and received praise from all quarters of the anti-slavery movement. The Liberator praised his "forcible and conclusive reasoning," his "burning appeal," "stinging rebuke," and "fervent eloquence."[2] A Boston correspondent of Zion's Advocate called Stanton "a truly eloquent speaker,"[3] and a Taunton paper exclaimed that he was "one of the most eloquent men that we have had the pleasure of hearing."[4] The Quincy Patriot described a Stanton speech at Dorchester, "His words were like living coals, and his eloquence bore all things onward like an overflowing stream."[5] Caroline Weston liked Stanton's "tremendous style,"[6] while Lydia Maria

---

[1] The Emancipator [New York], January 19, 1837, p. 151.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], February 11, 1837, p. 28 and August 24, 1838, p. 134.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], June 9, 1837, p. 95.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], March 31, 1837, p. 54.

[5] The Liberator [Boston], August 3, 1838, p. 123.

[6] Caroline Weston to Anne Warren Weston, Thursday afternoon, n.d., Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

Child was impressed by his "spontaneous eloquence."[1]

One of the first abolition lectures ever heard by Frederick Douglass, the former slave who was the most prominent Negro abolitionist, was delivered by Stanton, and it left an ineffaceable impression on his mind. The Negro leader told Stanton's son, Theodore, "Your father was then unquestionably the best orator in the anti-slavery movement."[2]

Stanton spoke nearly always without notes and used his quick wit to take advantage of unexpected occurrences.[3] He savored pungent phrases and prolonged metaphors. Stanton could wring the hearts of his hearers, having them in tears at one moment and at the next having them laugh at some creation of his quick wit.[4] Henry Stanton delighted in speaking and took great satisfaction from the response of his audiences. He frequently exaggerated. Amos Phelps wrote to Lewis Tappan in 1837 that Stanton was having too much fun in his "begging operations" and made larger stories than the fact warranted. Since he was engaged in a gigantic propaganda operation, Stanton frequently did not check his facts. Upon one occasion he told the story of a Richmond clergyman who had recaptured a runaway slave and would not allow her to be sold. Stanton saw the story in the Pennsylvania Record of July 2, 1831. He learned that the clergyman's name was Plummer from some Pennsylvania friends and mentioned that name when he related the story. Angelina Grimke heard the speech and contacted a Reverend Plumer of Richmond, who denied that he was the man. It turned out that the guilty party was a Reverend Turner of Richmond.[1]

---

[1] Lydia M. Child to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, May 24, 1863, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Theodore Stanton to the Chicago Inter-Ocean, January 21, 1887, in William Alonzo Stanton, Record of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891 (Albany: J. Munsell's Sons, 1891), p. 462.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Reminiscences," I, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Constantly traveling, lecturing repeatedly with little rest, Stanton suffered from throat infections, lung troubles and fatigue. Debora Weston once reported to her sister that Stanton looked so poorly that he would probably have to give up lecturing for a while. However, Stanton persevered with the help of a lady who beat him up an egg every now and then, just to keep him going.[2]

Fatigue and disease were only part of the hazards. Stanton's life was constantly in danger at the hands of hostile mobs, which, in their endeavors to silence the abolitionists, instead provided them with an issue that caused a transformation in the appeal of the abolitionists.

---

[1] The Emancipator [New York], March 2, 1837, p. 175.

[2] Debora Weston to Caroline Weston, n.d., Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

CHAPTER IV

DEFENDER OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

The year 1837 brought emphasis on a new dimension in the war against slavery. Abolitionists assumed the burden of defending the civil liberties of all citizens. From the opposition to their activities, the abolitionists discerned the spectre of a "Slave Power," a diabolical organism determined to destroy the very foundations of the democratic republic. That the abolitionists should conjure up a monstrous institution of malevolence was as natural as that they should attribute all beneficence to a personal God or identify human progress with the American democratic spirit. The experiences of the abolitionists in the 1830's made them receptive to the notion of a "Slave Spirit" and a "Slave Power," and these notions allowed them to turn the tables on their opponents. The anti-abolitionists had justified their suppression of liberty and their mob behavior on their intention to preserve the Union and ward off the danger of civil conflict which arose from agitation of the slavery question. The civil liberties issue allowed the abolitionists to accuse the accusers, to fling back the charge of subversion to their antagonists and to picture themselves as preservers and the slavery defenders as destroyers. The civil liberties issue was extremely good propaganda. It allowed abolitionists to reach those who had been unmoved by slavery, but who nevertheless cherished other rights which they came to see were endangered.[1]

Stanton was in the forefront of the drive to combine civil liberties with abolition, an operation which had the approval of all abolitionists. He probably more than any other abolitionist except Weld, had suffered abuse at the hands of the angry mobs. He had come to regard these manifestations of malevolence in terms of the medievalist theology to which he had fallen heir and attributed them to a Slave Spirit. The incongruence of democratic theory and American practice was made apparent by his experiences on the lecture platform. The most egregious acts of the mobocracy became commonplace to him during the decade of the 1830's. Nowhere is there a complete account of the activities of the two hundred odd mobs which Stanton encountered during his tours in the towns and cities of the country. Some of the recorded experiences, however, gave an indication of the treatment which anti-slavery reformers received in the free states.

On October 21, 1835, the day that the Utica mob broke up the meeting being held to form the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, and the day that Garrison was led through the Boston streets on a rope, Stanton was mobbed at Newport, Rhode Island. Led by an ex-lieutenant or midshipman of the navy, the hostile crowd stoned the building in which Stanton was speaking, smashed the windows and drove the abolitionists into the street.[1] Stanton's determination was only augmented by unruly assailants. He was prevented from making a speech at the Town Hall at Norwich one afternoon. By the evening nailed spikes were placed near the windows where Stanton was to stand and he was protected by them while he made his speech.[2] At Friends' Chapel in Portland, Maine in 1836, when Stanton began to deliver a speech, a tin horn and shouts drowned out his voice. The house was surrounded and pelted with stones, some very large ones entering the meeting place. Stanton advised his audience to keep quiet, fix their eyes upon him and pay no attention to what was going on outside. The shouting and other noise continued to the end of Stanton's address when the rioters dispersed of their own accord. The next evening a large crowd gathered and assembled outside the doors, making entry difficult. Stanton's speech was interrupted a few times by yells and the rattling of glass from stones that were thrown. Fortunately on this occasion free speech had the support of the mayor of the town, who had sent some constables. The calmness of the speaker and his audience and the resoluteness of the mayor confounded the intentions of the rioters. When Stanton left the meeting house, the mob followed him shouting, but no one dared touch him.[1]

---

[1] Russel B. Nye, Fettered Freedom, Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860 (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963), pp. 219-245.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 52; and John Gill, Tide Without Turning, Elijah P. Lovejoy and Freedom of the Press (Boston: Starr King Press, 1958), p. 42.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "Forty Years in Politics," New York Times, December 7, 1879, p. 5.

In April of 1836, Stanton lectured at Fowlersville, New York for two hours. During that time, as Stanton told it, "some lewd fellows were lurking about, partly intoxicated, swearing against abolitionism etc." The next morning Stanton learned that the Congregational meeting house in which he had lectured had been burned to the ground.[2] In January of 1837, Stanton delivered an eloquent and witty address to a group of ladies in Boston at Artists Gallery. At the conclusion of his speech, someone threw cayenne pepper upon the stove, which set the whole assembly to violent coughing and broke up the meeting.[3] In March of the same year, Stanton went to Woburn to make a speech on slavery. Many citizens from nearby Reading had gone to Woburn to hear the hearty abolitionist. They were followed by a number of rioters who shouted, "These are damned Reading abolitionists--no Woburn abolitionist dares show his head here--down with the Reading niggers. . . ." At the place appointed for the meeting, first there was shouting, followed by crowding, then fist-shaking, hat-knocking, mud-throwing and finally stone-throwing and the dispersal of the meeting. The two to three hundred men in the mob were led, The Liberator pointed out, by men of property and standing.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], October 1, 1836, p. 159.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, April 13, 1836, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], January 28, 1837, p. 18; and Anne Warren Weston to Debora Weston, January 30, 1837, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

In 1837 Stanton was to attend an anti-slavery convention in Newburyport. Since the abolitionists could obtain no hall, they held their meeting in the garden of a local resident. There a crowd swarmed to attack the speakers. The invading hordes cut the buttons off Stanton's coat and assailed him with decayed eggs and sticks.[2]

The refusal of a meeting place was common. Stanton and his friends were promised the City Hall for a state convention in Hartford in February of 1838. When the meeting was underway the abolitionists were informed that they had to vacate the building by 2 P.M. They adjourned to a nearby temperance house where an angry mob threatened them. An offer to use a Universalist meeting house in Cambridge was withdrawn because of fear of disturbances. Dedham selectmen refused the Town Hall for a Stanton speech because his topic, slavery, was an "excitable subject." Rare were the victories like the one in Worcester in 1838, when a pastor lost his position because of his refusal to let Birney and Stanton speak in his Union church.[3]

Stanton was undaunted. As he told the Rhode Island convention in

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 16, 1837, p. 99.

[2] Samuel T. Pickard, Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1907), pp. 154-155.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], March 1, 1838, p. 170; March 8, 1838, p. 174; and The Liberator [Boston], March 4, 1837, p. 48; March 11, 1837, p. 43; April 21, 1837, p. 68; March 9, 1838, p. 39.

1836, neither "popular proscription or private malice," neither "legislative enactments or ecclesiastical denunciations" would stop the abolitionists in their labors against the abominable institution of slavery, which was "at war with the dictates of humanity, subversive of our republican institutions, dangerous to the liberties of the free citizens of the Union, paralyzing to the march of freedom abroad, and hostile to the world's conversion to Christ."[1]

Stanton found that the more he persisted, the more people listened to him. When he returned to Rhode Island in 1836, he found that southerners who had once turned a deaf ear to the abolitionist message were listening, if not agreeing. He thought that the riotous groups were "mobbing up abolition, instead of mobbing it down."[2] The brickbats and the rotten eggs, the name-calling and the threats made converts to the anti-slavery cause. The most prominent figure to be added to the ranks by mob violence was the wealthy landowner of central New York, Gerrit Smith. Smith, a colonizationist, was converted to immediatism at the time of the Utica riots of 1835. Eccentric and stubborn, Smith became one of the truly great abolitionists and opened his substantial purse to the cause whenever it was needed. The conversion of a young Boston lawyer named Wendell Phillips was also hastened by mob action as he witnessed the whisking away of Garrison by the lawless mob in October of 1835. The assaults on freedom, as Stanton suggested, rallied defenders.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], November 19, 1836, p. 185.

[2] Ibid., September 10, 1836, p. 147.

When the restrictions on civil liberties reached the halls of Congress, the nation listened. In May of 1836, southern representatives, rankled by the presentation of petitions calling for an end to slavery in the District of Columbia, succeeded in passing a resolution, which had been introduced by Henry C. Pinckney, providing that petitions on the subject of slavery be laid on the table without being read, discussed, referred to committee, rejected or granted. Stanton considered the gag rule to be a violation of constitutional rights since the right of petition was nugatory if the prayer of the petitioners was not entertained. "Constitutions are framed to protect minorities in the exercise of their rights," Stanton exclaimed, but the House of Representatives, "the hired men of the people," had "virtually denied the right of the people to petition" and had "stabbed the vitals of the United States Constitution," making that document "an engine of oppression," a "rotten parchment not fit to be trampled in the mire." They had "put hooks in the nostrils of democracy," and prepared the way for the proscription of petitions relating to the tariff, public lands, transportation and the currency. The reprehensible action taken by Congress, Stanton told the delegates to the annual meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society of 1837, demanded of the entire people of Massachusetts a sincere effort to save the Constitution and the nation, which was "on the downward road to ruin."[1]

Stanton and his fellow abolitionists were well aware that limitations on the freedom of discussion had to be removed before what they regarded as the Truth should prevail. The moral message of the abolitionists could not be muzzled and still contend with the pro-slavery defenses. Stanton was convinced that in a fair contest between anti-slavery and pro-slavery doctrine there could be no other outcome but the complete repudiation of slavery. Slavery, to Stanton, was darkness which could not stand the light of free discussion. For slavery to be perpetuated, conscience had to be buried. Free discussion would resurrect conscience and ring the death knell of slavery. Abolitionist doctrine was irresistible, because it was Truth.[2] Southern representatives, determined that no stricture on slavery should receive a hearing in the House, seemed to share Stanton's belief.

Quite possibly the gag rule was more beneficial to the abolitionist cause than free discussion would have been. The threat to liberty represented by the gag rule was real, significant and ominous. Freedom of expression was being extinguished in the South. For purposes of comity and upon the insistence of Southern congressmen, an avenue of public interest was being closed to discussion. The abolitionists had a convincing case to present to the people of the North. As the abolitionists pictured it, the Slave Spirit, with which they had been contending, operating through the political process was the Slave Power. Their conflict with lawless crowds was metamorphosed into a struggle between liberty and the distinguished and well-dressed slavocrats of Congress who would put it down.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], February 4, 1837, pp. 21-23; February 11, 1837, p. 26; and Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. xxxvii.

[2] These ideas pervade Stanton's speeches. See, for example, Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in The Representatives Hall on the 23d and 24th of February, 1837 Before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts to Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery (second edition; Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. 41; and Henry B. Stanton, "Freedom and Slavery Always at War," Liberty Almanac for 1844, p. 26.

The Pinckney gag only intensified the determination of the abolitionists to press for the accomplishment of those objectives sought by the petitioners. The abolition of slavery in the nation's capital, Stanton thought, would be a mill-stone around the neck of the whole system of slavery. The District of Columbia, Stanton called the "Thermopylae of American freedom," and "the main gate at the entrance of the citadel." The abolition of slavery in the capital, Stanton maintained, would send a moral message which would capture "the intellect, the sympathy, the conscience, the soul of the entire South." It would be a "verdict of the whole people in the condemnation of slavery" and would express the judgment of the American people that slavery was not fit to live. If this object could be achieved, Stanton maintained, slavery could not last another five years.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], February 4, 1837, pp. 21-23.

The abolitionists set out to win over the state legislatures to their position and to get them to exert their influence on Congress to rescind the gag rule and abolish in the District what Stanton called "the foulest slave market on the face of the globe," and "a foul blot on the character of the nation."[1] The Massachusetts legislature was the first to be approached and Stanton was selected to carry the burden of this endeavor by addressing a committee of the State House of Representatives which was then considering petitions calling upon them to protest the gag rule. Stanton spoke to the committee and a full audience in Representatives Hall for one and one-half hours on the evening of February 23, 1837, and three hours the following morning. The second evening hundreds who had come to hear his speech were turned away. Stanton addressed the committee for one and one-quarter hours that evening until he finally broke down from the strain.[2]

Stanton told the representatives that slavery in the District was at war with the Constitution, the purposes of which were to establish justice and promote the general welfare. Liberty and the pursuit of happiness were inalienable rights holding precedence over property rights. The holding of slaves was not a natural right; it was in fact a violation of common law and owed its legal standing to statutes.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], February 4, 1837, p. 21.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 240-241, n. 6; and Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 238.

Since Congress had full power to legislate for the District, Stanton maintained, it had the legal right and the moral duty to abolish slavery there. The existence of slavery where Congress had jurisdiction made hypocrisy of pronouncements of freedom and threatened basic civil liberties such as the right of petition. Toasts, orations, songs, processions, speeches and patriotic messages, Stanton told his attentive listeners, would not redeem the national character as the anti-slavery movement was redeeming it. In the battle between slavery and freedom there was no middle ground. To tolerate slavery in the national capital was to foster a steady erosion of civil liberties. The petitions on slavery were being denied now, later other subjects would be added, Stanton warned. Free Negroes in the nation's capital had to prove their title to freedom or be committed to jail as runaways and sold into slavery to pay the price of their jail fees. The Southern argument that the existence of free Negroes in the nation's capital would make the slaves in Maryland and Virginia uneasy seemed to suggest that free Negroes in the northern states should be re-enslaved for the same reason. If this argument were sustained, why should it not apply also to farmers and mechanics? The common premise held North and South was that slavery and freedom were incompatible, Stanton emphasized. If men were to stop the extension of slavery, they should first extend the area of freedom.[1]

---

[1] Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in The Representatives Hall on the 23d and 24th of February, 1837 Before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts to Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery (second edition; Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), pp. 10-60.

But what of the southern fears of slave insurrections and the northern fears of disunion? Slave revolts, Stanton asserted, were the results of despair. The abolition of slavery in regions neighboring slave states would reduce rather than increase the chance of insurrection. It was the possibility of freedom that sustained hope and banished despondency. Threats of disunion Stanton dismissed as mere bravado. If the Union were to be dissolved, the South would have no help in putting down servile insurrections or in recovering fugitive slaves. A civil war would lead to a northern stimulation of slave revolts. Moreover, even the destruction of the Union could not stop the effects of anti-slavery agitation which was moral in nature.[1] "Yea, Sir," Stanton proclaimed, "if the Union were rent into ten thousand fragments--yet, if on every fragment there was a slaveholder, anti-slavery agitation would search him out, and scatter upon his naked heart the living coals of truth."[2]

The abolition of slavery in the District was practical and morally and legally right, Stanton affirmed. It would be the surest way of safeguarding the right of petition and other sacred rights. He ridiculed the argument that the abolition of slavery in the District should await the petitioning of its inhabitants. Congress had the power, it did not gain it from petitions. And why wait for slaveholders to ask for a law, when it is the slaves who are the injured parties? Did we expect highway thieves, Stanton queried, to ask for laws against robbery? Stanton appealed to Massachusetts, with its long tradition of liberty, to take the lead in this endeavor to extend freedom and preserve liberties.[1]

---

[1] Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in The Representatives Hall on the 23d and 24th of February, 1837 Before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts to Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery (second edition; Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), pp. 60-70.

[2] Ibid., pp. 71-72.

The effect of Stanton's tour de force was overwhelming. The Massachusetts House of Representatives by a vote of 378 to 16 and the Senate by a vote of 32 to 1 passed a resolution affirming the right of petition, excoriating the national House for the gag rule and affirming the right of Congress to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia.[2] Debora Weston observed that even former critics of Stanton were now admiring him and that the aristocracy, the high Whigs of New Bedford, had been converted to abolitionism.[3] Three hundred thousand copies of Stanton's speech were subsequently printed and distributed.[4] Said a writer for The Liberator: "It is generally acknowledged that this work has done more good in Massachusetts than any work of double the price, ever before published."[1]

---

[1] Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in The Representatives Hall on the 23d and 24th of February, 1837 Before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts to Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery (second edition; Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), pp. 65-66.

[2] Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838), p. 17.

[3] Debora Weston to Caroline Weston, April 5, 1837, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 50.

Following his notable achievement before the Massachusetts legislature, Stanton continued his tour throughout New England, calling for the freedom of black men and the preservation of the liberties of white men. Much time was spent in Massachusetts, which, along with Pennsylvania and New York, was regarded as one of the main states for the abolitionists to influence,[2] but Stanton also managed to address a total of six state legislatures.[3] During his speaking engagements, Stanton spoke from the same platforms as Dr. Charles Follen, Amos Dresser, Cyrus Grosvenor, John Fuller, Joshua Coffin, Samuel J. May, Amos Phelps, Charles Torrey and many other prominent abolitionists. He always welcomed the opportunity to share the platform with local clergymen. Speaking in a different town each day or two, and making several speeches in each, Stanton collected funds, promoted the distribution of publications, collected the names of reliable abolitionists to assist in the distribution of petitions and lobbied before state legislatures.[4] "Stanton is the Napoleon of our cause," Garrison said[1] of the zealous abolitionist who was addressing large crowds on such varied topics as the New Testament and slavery, the danger of slavery to the Union, the Texas annexation question, the right of petition, the duty of the churches, and the power and duty of Congress to abolish slavery where it had the authority.[2]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], May 5, 1837, p. 75.

[2] Charles C. Burleigh to J. Miller McKim, November 13, 1837, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 49.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], 1837 and 1838, passim.

The expansion of operations which accompanied the abolitionists' capitalization of the civil liberties issue put a strain on the national office of the American Anti-Slavery Society and necessitated a reorganization. In 1837 the Executive Committee put a staff of full-time executives in charge. Joshua Leavitt, who had been editing the religious journal, the Evangelist, replaced William Goodell as editor of The Emancipator, the organ of the national society, Theodore Weld was brought in to assist Elizur Wright with the correspondence, while Stanton was made financial secretary, a position which allowed him to remain in the lecture field a good part of the time. By the spring of the year, however, the work in New York became so heavy that Stanton was made a corresponding secretary and was compelled to spend most of his time at the national headquarters.[1] At the New York office, Stanton was surrounded by what Wright called a "dangerous clump of fanatics," including Leavitt, Whittier, Weld and Wright himself--a fine collection of talent, energy and devotion.[2] Birney joined the group in the summer of 1837 to assist with the correspondence. This fiercely dedicated clique edited two newspapers, The Emancipator and the Anti-Slavery Reporter, published and distributed tracts, employed and assigned and removed agents in the field, sent out numerous letters to abolitionists and political office-holders, gave instructions to abolitionists throughout the free states, handled the finances of the organization and directed the all important petition campaign which previously had been the exclusive province of state and local societies.[3] Weld, Whittier and Stanton were placed in charge of the expanded petition operation. Since both Weld and Whittier were in poor health, Stanton assumed the major responsibility for the gigantic propaganda project which turned the trickle of petitions into a torrent. When the expanded campaign commenced there were over one thousand local societies with a membership exceeding one hundred thousand. Proper organization was essential to mobilize the forces for a strong campaign. Stanton, with the help of Whittier, appointed two persons in each county to receive the petition forms prepared in New York. The county agents were instructed to secure two volunteers in each town within their jurisdiction and to distribute and collect the completed petitions from the town volunteers. The county officials either sent the petitions to the appropriate congressman or, if the congressman was not sympathetic, returned them to the national office in New York.[1]

---

[1] William Lloyd Garrison to George Benson, June 14, 1837, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], 1837 and 1838, passim.

---

[1] Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1837), Back Cover; Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964 [1933]), pp. 106-107; Benjamin P. Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 122-123; and Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 90.

[2] Elizur Wright to his parents, July 20, 1837, Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Theodore Weld to Sarah and Angelina Grimke, August 26, 1837, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 432-436; and Samuel T. Pickard (ed.), Whittier as a Politician, Illustrated by the Letters to Professor Elizur Wright, Jr. (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1900), p. 5.

Stanton wrote the flyers sent to these men, supplied them with petitions, issued instructions, answered queries and composed petitions to legislatures on specific subjects of local concern. He sent completed petitions that were returned to New York--sometimes containing as many as twenty thousand signatures a month--on to amenable congressmen.[2]

---

[1] Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1837), p. 27.

[2] Benjamin P. Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 130; Flyer from American Anti-Slavery Society, signed by Henry B. Stanton, June 14, 1837, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; Augustus Wattles to E. Wright, December 15, 1837, Wright Papers, Library of Congress; and "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," December 7, 1837, p. 12 and January 4, 1838, pp. 22-23.

There were two kinds of petitions, those sent to Congress and those sent to state legislatures. Both pleaded for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and in the territories, for the termination of the interstate slave trade and for the refusal by Congress to admit Florida as a state or to annex Texas. In addition the state legislatures were urged to repeal all state laws which made distinctions among American citizens on the basis of color and were requested to pass laws guaranteeing trial by jury for fugitives.[1] Some petitions asked for only one object. Others listed several objects to be achieved. The number of signatures varied. One petition, protesting the capture of a fugitive slave, George Latimer, in Boston, was so long that it was wound on a large reel. Stanton had the pleasure of watching John Quincy Adams present this petition to the House of Representatives.[2]

The petition campaign provided all persons with abolitionist inclinations the opportunity to actively participate in the cause. Women in particular were delighted with the opportunity to participate in public affairs by carrying petitions from door to door and registering their names on the memorials. Individuals who would not have thought of attending abolitionist meetings were reached in their homes, informed of abolitionist principles, and forced to make a decision, reminded that a refusal to sign a petition was complicity in the maintenance of slavery.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 23, 1837, p. 102.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 60-61.

The prime figure on the receiving end of the petition team was John Quincy Adams, who parried the pro-slavery forces, introduced petitions and, with a few allies like William Slade of Vermont and Joshua Giddings of Ohio, fought the gag rules that were introduced at every session of Congress. Adams was not an abolitionist but his efforts were gratefully acknowledged by Stanton. To Stanton, Adams was "the Jubilator of the Constitution," who "in his youth displayed the maturity of age, and his age exhibits the elasticity of youth." Admitting Adams' eccentricities, Stanton was not offended by them, believing that they constituted the man who was the champion of free press, free speech and the right of petition.[2] At the quarterly meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in 1837, Wendell Phillips moved that Adams' actions in Congress "deserve the deepest gratitude and warmest admiration." Stanton moved that the tally be taken by rising and the whole audience rose to their feet in an unusual gesture to one who was not of their persuasion.[3]

---

[1] Right and Wrong in Boston: Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, With a Sketch of the Obstacles Thrown in the Way of Emancipation by Certain Clerical Abolitionists and Advocates for the Subjection of Women, in 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), pp. 83-84; James G. Birney to Lewis Tappan, February 3, 1838, Tappan Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton to The Emancipator [New York], September 19, 1839, p. 82.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 5, 1839, p. 2.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], April 7, 1837, p. 59.

Stanton worked incessantly to maintain the momentum of the petition campaign. He was elated with the effort that was made by abolitionists throughout the North and was particularly grateful to the women for whom he took care always to provide an abundance of petitions. When the machinery was set up for handling petitions, Stanton could afford to take time to devote to other duties, confident that the appeals to Congress and the state legislatures would continue to pour forth.

The effect of the petitions on public policy is hard to assess. Public opinion expressed in petitions and through other channels prevented the annexation of Texas for nine years. The only positive abolitionist goal achieved through legislation before the Civil War, however, was the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia. This was a hollow triumph, coming as it did with a strict fugitive slave law and popular sovereignty in the Mexican Cession. Civil liberties gained a victory with the rescinding of the gag rule in 1844. This accomplishment was as much the result of the persistent labors of Adams, Giddings, Slade, Seth Gates of New York and other anti-slavery congressmen as it was the petitions which they handled. Perhaps the most important result of the petition campaign was the changed atmosphere in the nation's capital and throughout the North. Slavery was made a legitimate topic of discussion.

The petition campaign commanded only part of Stanton's energies. He shared the home correspondence with Whittier until the summer of 1837 when Birney arrived to assist them. Birney and Stanton divided their office work so that when one was lecturing the other remained in New York City. Stanton was thus freed to attend conventions and meetings in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania and Connecticut.[1] Stanton did superb work.

Weld wrote to his future wife:

> Stanton is driven incessantly night and day. The labor he has performed this summer has been prodiguously great. He has sent off personally thousands of circulars and petitions and written many hundreds of letters, besides doing a world of other business. All this has been done in great haste with no leisure for details, subject to calls at every moment, and the office filled with people from morning to night.[2]

One of Stanton's many duties involved the sending of commissions to agents who had been approved by the Agency and Executive committees. On September 20, 1837, Stanton sent one such commission to the Reverend Elijah Lovejoy who was at the time suffering extreme harassment in trying to publish an anti-slavery newspaper in Alton, Illinois. He apologized to Stanton in a letter written on October 14 for not having responded sooner, explaining that all of his time was spent in trying to maintain his presses. Lovejoy promised Stanton that he would do all that was within his power to further the society's views and plans. He added, "I cannot promise that just now, I can do much. I feel that my great business now is to re-establish my press, and maintain it in the face of all opposition." Despite the efforts made to intimidate him, the intrepid minister was convinced that the cause of anti-slavery was advancing in the state. "Complete victory," he announced, "is just ahead. I can already seize it with my eye. From this time forth slavery will be the all-absorbing topic of discussion in Illinois, until public sentiment shall have been completely revolutionized."[1] Lovejoy was mistaken in his belief that he could do little for the cause at the time. On November 7 an angry mob killed him in order to destroy his presses. His martyrdom caused an acceleration in the activities of the abolitionists, impressed Northerners with the threat to their liberties, and gave credence to the abolitionist depiction of a Slave Power which had no respect for life, liberty or property. Lovejoy's death presented the abolitionists with an unprecedented opportunity. Stanton told George Benson that the "dreadful murder at Alton of the lion-hearted Lovejoy" had thrown the New York office into a flurry of activity. "Blood has been shed, and we must now enlarge our operations greatly to meet this exigency. . . . The public mind is deeply roused," Stanton observed. "We must press our principles home. . . ."[1] Callous and opportunistic as this may seem, to have refused to make use of the murder would have drained social meaning from Lovejoy's valor and tossed aside an opportunity to score against the malevolent spirit of intolerance that caused Lovejoy's demise. The abolitionists could not fail to point out that slavery, supposedly based on the right of private property, had given birth to a force which destroyed private property; that the ethos of slavery had little respect for human life, whether it be enshrined in a black skin or a white skin; that slavery was inextricably linked with violence.

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," December 7, 21, 1837; The Emancipator [New York], October 5, 1837, p. 88; Elizur Wright to his parents, July 20, 1837, Wright Papers, Library of Congress; Theodore Weld to James Birney, June 26, 1837, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1838), I, 389-391; Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 7, 1837, ibid., p. 412; and Betty Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney, Slaveholder to Abolitionist (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955), p. 162.

[2] Theodore Weld to Angelina Grimke, October 16, 1837, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 463-464.

---

[1] Elijah Lovejoy to Henry B. Stanton, October 14, 1837, Lovejoy Papers, Miscellaneous Mss., New York Historical Society.

The Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society decided to publish a biography of Lovejoy with the proceeds to go to the martyr's family. Local societies were advised to hold commemoration meetings.[2] Stanton was invited by Garrison to address a Faneuil Hall meeting on the Lovejoy murder.[3] Apparently other business prevented him from doing so, but the audience was not disappointed for the handsome young patrician, Wendell Phillips, there made the first of his many great anti-slavery orations.

Stepped up activities by the national organization after Lovejoy's death kept Stanton going at a swift pace. He shuttled between New York City and New England during the early months of 1838, speaking with his usual felicity, collecting badly needed funds, lobbying and distributing tracts to state legislators, particularly Kimball and Thome's account of West India emancipation, which substantiated the arguments that the abolitionists had been making about the salutary effects of immediate abolition.[1] The volume of work demanding attention in New York City prevented him from making a speech before the Massachusetts legislature in 1838, but he sent instructions as to what topics to press and what pamphlets to distribute to achieve the best effect.[2] At the national office, Stanton helped prepare for the May anniversary meeting. He sent out the call for the business meeting which recited many of the achievements of the past year in reaching and influencing state legislatures and increasing the membership of anti-slavery societies.[3] Stanton labored with James Birney and Elizur Wright to turn out the Fifth Annual Report of the organization and read the abstract of the report at the annual convention. Over four hundred thousand signatures, Stanton informed the delegates, had been sent to the House of Representatives in Washington and almost an equal number to the Senate. The number of new societies added over the year had averaged one a day, while thirty-eight traveling agents had occupied the field. Publications during the year had totalled 646,000 items.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton (and William Chace) to George W. Benson, November 28, 1837, Boston Public Library.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," December 4, 1837, pp. 6-9.

[3] Henry B. Stanton (and William Chace) to George Benson, November 28, 1837, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, January 28, 1838, Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1838), I, 448-449; Theodore Weld to James Birney, February 5, 1838, ibid., pp. 451-452; and Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, February 14, 1838, ibid., p. 453.

[2] Sarah Grimke to Theodore Weld, February 12, 1838, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), II, 542; Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; and Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, February 14, 1838, Dumond (ed.), op. cit., p. 453.

[3] "Call for Business Meeting," April 2, 1838, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

For the year to follow Stanton was selected to serve on the important Executive Committee, on the Finance and Political Action subcommittees, and on a special committee to report on the best means for future operations with the state auxiliaries. He also continued as one of the corresponding secretaries of the national organization.[2]

After the annual meeting of 1838, Henry B. Stanton, along with abolitionist friends, Charles C. Burleigh, Garrison, Dresser, Henry C. Wright, Maria Chapman, Abby Kelly, and others, traveled to Philadelphia to attend the wedding of Theodore Weld and Angelina Grimke in the home of Anna Frost, an elder sister of Angelina.[3] After the wedding,

---

[1] Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1838), passim; and The Liberator [Boston], May 11, 1838, p. 75.

[2] Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the AASS, pp. 44 and 49; and "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," May 10, 1838, pp. 59-60.

[3] Benjamin P. Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), p. 162; and Catherine H. Birney, The Grimke Sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, the First American Women Advocates of Women's Rights (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1885), p. 231.

Stanton assisted in the dedication of Pennsylvania Hall, which had been built at a cost of $40,000 as a Temple of Freedom where even unpopular ideas might be aired. Alvan Stewart, the abolitionist lawyer of Utica, delivered the principal oration and Whittier contributed a poem for the occasion which went in part:

> But this fair Hall of Truth and Freedom given,
> Pledged to the right before all earth and Heaven,
> A free arena for the strife of mind,
> To caste, or sect, or color unconfined,
> Shall thrill with echoes such as ne'er of old,
> From Roman Hall or Grecian Temple rolled;
> Thoughts shall find utterance such as never yet
> The propylae or the Forum met.[1]

Two days after its dedication, Pennsylvania Hall was burned down by a mob![2]

Stanton made several more speeches in Pennsylvania, reported back to the Executive Committee in New York, and was sent on a two week tour of Massachusetts, during which time he attended the annual convention of the New England Anti-Slavery Society. In June he attended a convention and made several speeches in western New York. He was then sent to Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Maine, collecting money and enlisting recruits in the anti-slavery cause.[1] Stanton was immensely impressed with transportation improvements that increased the speed of travel and augured the conquest by man of time and space. Stanton told the readers of The Emancipator that the "steam of the age" as well as the "spirit of the age" was against slavery, a quip which signified an awareness of the forces that were at work to undermine the slave system.[2] Stanton welcomed the changes that would result from industrial progress. He had a vision of the future in which men would harness the forces of nature and cease harnessing their fellow men. Slavery was not only a moral evil, it was antithetical to progress.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, September 7, 1839, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 53; and Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 226.

In October of 1838, Stanton reviewed the progress of the anti-slavery cause before the delegates of a Young Man's Convention assembled in Worcester. He said that the abolitionists had succeeded in exciting public discussion and arousing the consciences of the North. The struggles against the gag rule had "induced great numbers to join our ranks who else would perhaps never have been abolitionists." Several state legislatures had become allies. Three hundred abolitionist newspapers, Stanton said, were carrying the anti-slavery message to citizens of all classes. Fifteen hundred anti-slavery societies were in existence, with more than two hundred thousand determined members, including from four to five thousand ministers.[1]

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," May 23, 1838, p. 67; June 21, 1838, pp. 77-78; July 5, 1838, pp. 83-84; and The Emancipator [New York], September 6, 1838, p. 77.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to The Emancipator [New York], September 6, 1838, p. 77.

Stanton had played a major role in augmenting the ranks of the abolitionists, in linking abolition with civil liberties and in inspiring the reformers with the will to carry on the great crusade. The great tasks remaining, he believed, were to maintain the strength that had been amassed, to augment that strength, and to employ it in all Constitutional ways to achieve the destruction of slavery.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], December 7, 1838, pp. 193-194.

CHAPTER V

POLITICAL ACTIVIST

The failure of abolitionists to get the moral message to the South by speaking and writing induced them to seek other means to achieve their goals. Political action, at first through the interrogation of candidates for office on their intentions in regard to slavery, was eagerly taken up by Stanton, who came to believe that slavery could be ended if abolitionists' power was fully employed in the political sphere. The interrogation of candidates, however, proved to be unsuccessful and Stanton's insistence that abolitionists were duty-bound to vote met resistance and portended a fissure in the ranks of the abolitionists.

Failure of the Moral Appeal

Stanton's conversion experience had convinced him that moral regeneration could be induced by preaching and writing. The Lane Debates had further reinforced his belief that men reared in slaveholding communities could be persuaded of the wrongness of slavery through verbal appeals. The purpose of the founding of anti-slavery societies in the North and the enlisting of preachers and laymen in the cause was to influence the South. The moral army of the North was to demand that its brethren in the South cease their barbarity and return to democratic and Christian principles. Local societies did not exist simply to arouse local enthusiasm for the cause, but to mobilize the moral power that would penetrate the South and convince the slaveholders that slavery was a sin.

The South, however, defending slavery as a positive good, was in no mood to yield to moral suasion in the 1830's. The northern anti-slavery argument accompanied a decline in southern anti-slavery sentiment. Southerners reacted to moral suasion with hostility and threatened to lynch abolitionists who came south. They offered rewards of thousands of dollars for the delivery of abolitionists such as Garrison, Arthur Tappan, and Amos Phelps to southern vengeance.[1]

David Walker's Appeal,[2] a call for slave insurrection written by a free Negro in 1829, and Nat Turner's Rebellion of 1831 stimulated the passage of a series of laws abridging freedom of speech and of the press. Fear of slave insurrections appeared to be the primary cause of these attacks on liberty.[3]

Panic in the Lower South reached fever heights in the summer of 1835. Five white men and over a dozen Negroes were hanged for participating in a real or imagined conspiracy to foment a slave rebellion.

---

[1] Charles Sydnor, Development of Southern Sectionalism 1819-1848 Vol. V of A History of the South, eds. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. 10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), p. 243.

[2] Charles M. Wiltse (ed.), David Walker's Appeal, in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America (American Century Series. New York: Hill and Wang, 1965).

[3] Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), pp. 118-125.

Repressive laws were passed throughout the South after 1836. These laws meted out severe punishment to individuals advocating abolition or circulating abolitionist materials.[1]

In Nashville, Tennessee, in 1835, Amos Dresser, who had been a student with Stanton at Lane Seminary, was publicly whipped for carrying anti-slavery publications. The same year, Reuben Crandall, brother of Prudence, spent eight months in a Washington jail before being brought to trial and acquitted on the charge of intending to circulate incendiary publications. His "crime" had been to give someone a copy of The Emancipator.[2] In July of 1835 citizens of Charleston, South Carolina, led by ex-Governor Robert B. Hayne, broke into the post office, seized packages of abolitionist propaganda and burned them in the streets. When Amos Kendall, Jackson's Postmaster General, was contacted for instructions, he responded that an obligation on one's community took precedence over an obligation to the laws. Jackson, at the opening of Congress, recommended the passage of a law that would prohibit the sending through the mails of "incendiary publications" intended to incite slave rebellions. Although the abolitionists had no such intention, they knew that the law, if passed, would prevent their attempting to reach southern minds. The bill which incorporated Jackson's suggestion was defeated because of Calhoun's concern for state rights and his animosity toward Jackson, but decisions on the mails were left with local postmasters who effectively prevented the circulation of anti-slavery documents.[1] A federal law passed in July of 1836, which prohibited the detaining of properly addressed mail, went unenforced by Kendall and his successors. When William Leggett, acting editor of the New York *Evening Post*, condemned the censorship of the press, his paper was deprived of its government patronage. The result was that the federal government gave virtual assistance to the South in its censorship of the press. The abolitionists for the most part gave up trying to influence Southern minds by the sending of literature.[2]

---

[1] Clement Eaton, Freedom of Thought in the Old South (New York: Peter Smith, 1951), pp. 95-98, 128-130.

[2] Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (The New American National Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 75-76.

Laws were passed in southern states to limit the free expression of ideas. Even native born Southerners were fearful of the consequences of attacking slavery publicly.[3] By 1837 there was not an anti-slavery society in all of the South.[1] No hope remained that the abolitionists could penetrate the closed society with their moral message. The southern curtain of fear was proof against all appeals.

---

[1] Clement Eaton, "Censorship of the Southern Mails," *American Historical Review*, XLVIII (1943), 266-270; and Louis Filler, *The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860* (*The New American Nation Series*, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 98-99.

[2] Eaton, *op. cit*., pp. 273-274.

[3] Clement Eaton, *The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860* (*The New American Nation Series*, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 311.

Stanton concluded that new means had to be devised to allow the moral message to penetrate the southern conscience, and this demanded the mobilization of northern power. As he was to put it in 1840:

> Moral power must expect to exert its influence upon those among us not involved in slave-holding, that they may hedge around the slave-holders with a wall of fire from which they cannot escape. . . . Slavery so deadens the conscience, perverts the intellect and stultifies the moral sense of man, that nothing but the arm of power can wring the freedom of the Negro from the grasp of the slaveholder. I do not undervalue moral power, but that, so far as the United States are concerned, must be exerted on the free; and those who are free among us must exert their power on the slave-holder.[2]

Political Action

Stanton became increasingly convinced that political power had to be developed and used. His espousal of political action was based on the premise that "every American is a politician; all have titles to nobility; every body is heir-apparent to the throne. We are, therefore, politicians, almost from necessity."[1] To Stanton political action was not an abandonment of moral suasion, but a supplement to it, a necessary means of getting the moral message to the South. Stanton did not believe that federal law could substitute for moral suasion, because only state action could directly eliminate slavery and this would have to follow rather than precede conversion. The alternative to moral suasion was war and this was to Stanton in the 1830's unthinkable.[2] Stanton had rejoiced over the British emancipation of slavery in the West Indies but realized that on this side of the Atlantic the feat could not be duplicated. As he told a largely British audience in 1840:

---

[1] Charles Sydnor, Development of Southern Sectionalism 1819-1848 (Vol. V of A History of the South, eds. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. 10 vols.; Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), p. 242.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, speech, Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12 to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), p. 424.

> The abolitionists of the United States stand on comparatively narrow ground. They have no Imperial Parliament to which they can appeal, and demand that it say to slavery, "Thus far thou shalt come, and no further, and here thy proud waves shall be stayed." . . . It is chiefly moral influence which we can exert upon the question in the United States; such as you would have been called to exercise upon the West Indies, had there been no Imperial Parliament. It was only because power was lodged in the British Parliament, that you achieved your victory. We have but two or three points on which we can petition the general Government. One is, the abolition of slavery in the district of Columbia; another is the prohibition of the internal slave-trade.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, speech, Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12 to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), p. 124.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, speech to Young Men's State Convention in Worcester, The Liberator [Boston], December 7, 1838, p. 193.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, speech, General Anti-Slavery Convention, p. 479.

Stanton believed that the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia would send a moral message which would capture "the intellect, the sympathy, the conscience, the soul of the entire South." It would be a "verdict of the whole people in the condemnation of slavery" and would express the judgment of the American people that slavery was unworthy to survive. After this, Stanton maintained, slavery could not last another five years.[1]

Stanton's espousal of political means to overthrow slavery was not a new departure. Political action against the accursed institution was older than the republic. The Ordinance of 1787 had forbidden slavery in the Northwest territories. Congress had thrown restrictions around and then abolished the foreign slave trade. Each of the northern states had abolished the institution within their borders. The debate over the admission of Missouri had demonstrated substantial Northern hostility to the institution and the desire to restrict its expansion by political means.

It was man-made laws that made slaves, kept them in bondage and returned them to slavery when they attempted to secure their natural right to freedom. The determination of abolitionists like Stanton to work through the political process to secure the end of slavery was consistent with both reason and history. The petitioning of Congress on the subject of slavery, which had begun as early as 1790, had as one of its primary aims the securing of laws that would free men held in bondage and cripple the institution of slavery. Petitioning was political action just one step removed from what Stanton was advocating for the abolitionists in 1836. The struggle over the gag rule had shown how diligently the small body of abolitionists were willing to work; it also showed the effect that an organized campaign could have on the public mind, once the issue was thrust upon the national stage. The activities of John Quincy Adams in getting petitions and the petition issue before the public laid the foundations for political action against slavery.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], February 4, 1837, p. 21.

All that had kept Henry Stanton from emphasizing political action previously had been the weakness of the movement. As Stanton phrased it: "It would have been useless to have shipped the paddle wheels till we had the steam to move them."[1] There were five hundred twenty-three abolitionist societies in the country in the spring of 1837 with a membership approximating sixty thousand. There were roughly one abolitionist for every two hundred fifty Americans, a seemingly small number. However, most of the abolitionist strength was located in New England, New York and Ohio, suggesting that the concerted use of its numbers in these large and politically important areas could achieve success far beyond what appeared to be their strength.[2]

The new phase of political activity focussed on the interrogation of candidates for Congress and the state legislatures to secure a statement of their views and intentions. The abolitionists were attempting to employ the full force of an organized and virile movement toward the ultimate goal of specific legislation to cripple and destroy slavery. As early as November of 1836 Stanton had urged the abolitionists of Rhode Island to withhold their votes from any public official who would deny either the right to petition on slavery or the power and duty of Congress to abolish slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia.[1] He had repeated the resolution at the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society's convention held in January of 1837.[2] The resolution brought a Mr. Hall of Boston to his feet with an objection to any type of political action. Oddly, in view of later occurrences, it was William Lloyd Garrison who rose to defend Stanton's position and declare that the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society had advocated "moral and political action." Garrison added that it was his opinion that abolitionists should not vote for any man who would not maintain the right of petition and advocate the abolition of slavery wherever Congress had the power. Stanton observed that, like it or not, there was political action, and in the nature of things there would have to be political action. The question is, said Stanton, "Shall we sit quietly by, and permit the present political action to continue (for continue it will) or shall we introduce a system of action more in accordance with the spirit of our free institutions?" Stanton asserted that men had political as well as religious responsibilities that could not be dodged. Every man in this democracy was bound to use his vote for the promotion of political and moral right. Stanton went on to say that political action by the abolitionists would not necessarily lead to the formation of a national political party, but it would involve the interrogation of the candidates of the major parties and thus assure that these parties would run anti-slavery candidates. The resolution was passed with but one dissenting vote.[1]

---

[1] J. C. Jackson, September 9, 1839, to Union Herald as reprinted in The Liberator [Boston], October 4, 1839, p. 157.

[2] Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), pp. 33-35.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], November 19, 1836, p. 185.

[2] Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. xxxvii.

The same year a committee consisting of Stanton, Whittier, Garrison and Reverend Orange Scott drew up a resolution, presented to the convention of the national organization by Garrison, which urged abolitionists to withhold votes from uncooperative or hostile candidates. The resolution was approved and the technique, which had been used with some success by the politically-oriented New York abolitionists in the fall of 1836, became settled policy.[2]

At the national convention of the American Anti-Slavery Society, held in 1838, a list of test questions to be put to candidates for office was drawn up and approved. A candidate for office was expected to affirm his intention to work for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the termination of the interstate slave trade. He was to do all in his power to prevent the annexation of Texas and to secure recognition by the United States government of the government of Haiti and the treatment of that country on a most favored nation basis.[1] Stanton, Elizur Wright and Birney, as secretaries of the society, sent out a flyer calling upon abolitionists to secure the election of good men to Congress and the state legislatures, maintaining that "the peace, the Safety-Yea, almost the very existence of our government, depends, under God, on securing the election of such men. . . ."[2] Abolitionists were urged to use their political power to stamp their principles on both major parties. If neither party nominated a proper candidate, the abolitionists were urged either to abstain from voting, or, in cases where a majority of the total vote was required for election, to scatter their votes.[3]

---

[1] Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), pp. 37-38; and The Liberator [Boston], February 11, 1837, p. 26.

[2] Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1837), p. 23; and Margaret L. Plunkett, "A History of the Liberty Party with Emphasis Upon Its Activities in the Northeastern States" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ithaca, Cornell University, 1930), pp. 47-48. Typewritten.

Since there was practically no objection to this policy, Stanton was convinced that the course of political action had the approval of the vast body of abolitionists and should be pursued with vigor. At the convention of the New England Anti-Slavery Society in May of 1838, Stanton claimed that it was the duty of abolitionists to procure the nomination of candidates congenial to abolitionism and to vote for candidates, irrespective of party, who would promote the cause. The duty of abolitionists to vote was an innovation which was not challenged. The resolutions on political matters were adopted "with great unanimity."[1]

---

[1] Fifth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1838), p. 14.

[2] Flyer from Anti-Slavery Office, New York, July, 1838, Autograph Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[3] Flyer from Anti-Slavery Office, New York, July, 1838, Autograph Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

The political seed that had been planted during Stanton's youth and nurtured in Rochester was now blossoming. Best of all, the political action that Stanton was engaged in was ennobled by the excellence of its objective: the elimination of slavery and discrimination. Political means were directed toward moral ends. Stanton spoke at conventions at Worcester, Danvers, Northampton, Concord and Utica during the fall of 1838, urging abolitionists to use their position as a balance of power to win major party candidates over to a strong position, and asking anti-slavery men to put aside all thoughts of state policy or political economy in deciding for whom to vote. The resolutions passed at these conventions were in complete accord with Stanton's recommendations.[2]

Stanton enjoyed immensely this foray into the political sphere.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 8, 1838, p. 90.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], October 12, 1838, p. 162; "Proceedings of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Convention, Held at Danvers, October 24, 1838, Essex Institute"; The Liberator [Boston], October 26, 1838, pp. 173, 175; and The Liberator [Boston], September 28, 1838, p. 155.

He spared no candidates from rebuke, if he believed them so deserving. He denounced Daniel Webster as "craven, recreant, untrue to his professed principles and to the cause of liberty and equal rights."[1] He castigated Martin Van Buren, avowing that he would never give his official approval to a law to abolish slavery in the District of Columbia without the consent of the South. Stanton claimed that Van Buren had "perpetrated an act of high-handed tyranny--proved himself to be a DESPOT rather than a DEMOCRAT," and that the President was unfit to be voted for until he should repent.[2] Both United States senators from Massachusetts were flailed for remaining silent when threats against the lives of their abolitionist constituents were uttered on the floor of the upper house. Massachusetts congressmen--John Quincy Adams excepted--were rebuked for not seeking repeal of the gag rule, for not pressing measures to abolish slavery in the District and the interstate slave trade, and for not answering southern insults to their constituents.[3] Constant pressure on politicians, Stanton believed, would have influence. It lost him personal popularity--hissing and a loud clamor followed the announcement at a Whig convention in Utica in the summer of 1838 that Stanton was to speak in the city--but candidates for office had to consider abolitionist votes.[1]

---

[1] John Greenleaf Whittier to Robert Rantoul, Jr., March 1, 1837, Whittier Papers, Essex Institute.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], October 12, 1838, p. 162.

[3] Ibid.

One of the Massachusetts candidates for Congress who was forced by the abolitionists to declare himself more fully than he wished to was Caleb Cushing, the wily Whig. Cushing had not been antipathetic to the abolitionists--he had in fact kept Stanton posted on events in Congress relating to the annexation of Texas[2]--but, his letter in response to abolitionist queries was evasive. He affirmed his devotion to liberty and the Constitution but insisted upon clinging to his "personal independence." Stanton read the letter to the Essex County Anti-Slavery Convention in the fall of 1838 and commented upon it with scathing sarcasm. Stanton told the convention that Cushing's position was not strong enough to merit abolitionist support. The delegates voted to support Stanton's position.[3] Unbeknownst to Stanton, Cushing was listening from a dark corner in the gallery to the speech ridiculing his letter. The next morning Whittier, a friend of the incumbent candidate, appeared in Cushing's hotel room. The Quaker poet was asked by Cushing what he must do to win abolitionist support. When Whittier finished explaining, Cushing, still in night robe and night cap, penned a letter saying that he favored abolition of slavery and the slave trade in the District of Columbia "by the earliest practicable legislation of Congress."[1] Many abolitionists still did not trust Cushing, but Whittier brought a good number to his support and the Whig candidate was returned to Congress.[2] Cushing's case was more dramatic than most, but politicians were becoming aware of the power of the abolitionists.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William Lloyd Garrison, The Liberator [Boston], July 27, 1838, p. 119.

[2] Claude M. Fuess, The Life of Caleb Cushing (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923), I, 238.

[3] Ibid., pp. 251-253; Samuel T. Pickard, Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), p. 182; and Report of the Convention in the Lowell Journal printed in The Liberator [Boston], December 14, 1838, p. 200.

In the states of the Northwest, abolitionists took to the interrogation of candidates with alacrity. In the election of 1838, Ohio abolitionists succeeded in defeating the incumbent, Governor Vance, who had delivered J. B. Mahan, an Ohioan accused of assisting an escaped slave, to the Kentucky authorities. The Ohio anti-slavery men contributed significant help to the Democratic members of the state legislature. Good will was engendered between the abolitionists and Democrats also because of the anti-gag rule activities and strong anti-slavery pronouncements of United States Senator Thomas Morris. The potential solidarity of Democrats and abolitionists was wrecked, however, when the Democrats purged Morris from the party in 1839.[1] The day for alliances had not yet dawned.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 57-58; George R. Carpenter, John Greenleaf Whittier (American Men of Letters. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903), p. 105; Samuel T. Pickard, Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907), I, 123; The Liberator [Boston], November 16, 1838, p. 182; and The Emancipator [New York], September 29, 1847, p. 2.

[2] Charles T. Torrey to Amos Phelps, November 16, 1838, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

A portentous struggle occurred in Middlesex County, Massachusetts in 1838, where both major parties ran candidates unacceptable to the abolitionists. On November 8, a month before the election was to be held, Phelps and Stanton co-authored a letter asking the anti-slavery men of the district to scatter their votes among candidates of their choice in order to prevent either major party candidate from receiving the majority required for election. William Parmenter, the abolitionists were told, could under no circumstances be supported. Nathan Brooks, the Whig, was declared to be a colonizationist. To vote for him would be to sacrifice immediatism, "the sheet anchor of our cause."[2] In December an audience of abolitionists at Concord listened to Stanton censure both candidates. Stanton explained that an anti-slavery speech that he was to deliver in Townsend had been cancelled after a consultation between town leaders and Nathan Brooks because it was believed that Stanton's oration would be detrimental to the political prospects of Mr. Brooks. The convention at Concord voted to support neither Parmenter nor Brooks.[3]

Nathan Brooks was piqued and addressed a letter to The Liberator in which he called Stanton "an ardent young man" pursuing a cause of

---

[1] Theodore C. Smith, The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897), p. 30.

[2] Henry B. Stanton and Amos Phelps to "Dear Sir," November 8, 1838, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], December 14, 1838, p. 199.

"baseness and injustice," influenced by a "sinister motive." Brooks said that Stanton was "recreant to the truth, regardless of the rights and reputation of his neighbor, destitute of every principle of honesty." Brooks claimed that he had nothing to do with closing the doors on Stanton.[1] Stanton answered Brooks' charges with a statement signed by fifty-seven of the sixty or sixty-one abolitionists who had attended the Concord meeting. They denied that Stanton had "labored with much ingenuity and sophistry," as Brooks had charged, to convince them that the meeting house had been closed to Stanton because of Brooks' connivance. Stanton had let his audience draw their own inferences, but told Brooks that the inferences which they drew were not at all far-fetched. Why, Stanton asked, would the conference with Brooks have been mentioned at the time he was refused permission to speak unless it had been relevant to the subject? Moreover, two persons who had attended the conference at Townsend supported Stanton's version of what had happened there. Stanton said the purpose of his Concord remarks was to demonstrate the spuriousness of the Whig claim that Brooks was pro-abolition. If Brooks were so inclined, Stanton asked, why would a non-political anti-slavery speech have been harmful to Brooks' election chances? Stanton accused Brooks of assaulting his character without an adequate investigation of what was said at Concord.[2] Stanton's wit, sarcasm and logic revealed the skill at parry and thrust that would serve him so well. He relished a political scuffle, particularly with a pseudo-abolitionist.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], December 21, 1838, p. 203.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to The Liberator [Boston], December 28, 1838, p. 206.

In the regular election, the scattering of votes by the abolitionists denied a majority to Brooks or to Parmenter. The abolitionists were delighted with this verification of their strength as a balance of power. Gerrit Smith told Stanton that the whole nation would be influenced by the conduct of the voters in the district. Perseverance in subsequent contests in that district would be worth more to the cause than tens of thousands of dollars, wrote the wealthy abolitionist.[2] Smith and Nathaniel P. Rogers, the New Hampshire editor, both called the contest the "Thermopylae of the cause." Rogers informed the Massachusetts voters that New Hampshire abolitionists "have been cheered by your example. It has filled our hearts with hope. It has taught us that party may be conquered,--a lesson taught no where [sic] else but in your district."[3] Whittier, in Pennsylvania, sent his congratulations to the voters and told them that he had found in the election results evidence "that there is power in our principles to break down the despotism of party. . . ."[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to The Liberator [Boston], December 28, 1838, p. 206; and The Liberator [Boston], January 4, 1839, p. 3.

[2] Gerrit Smith to Henry B. Stanton, January 12, 1839, The Liberator [Boston], January 25, 1839, p. 14.

[3] Ibid.; and N. P. Rogers, January 10, 1839, to The Liberator [Boston], January 18, 1839, p. 10.

[4] John Greenleaf Whittier, January 12, 1839, to The Liberator [Boston], January 18, 1839, p. 10.

Despite some of the successes achieved by the questioning of candidates the effort on the whole was a failure. In few districts did the abolitionists actually hold the balance of power. Even in those districts where they were strong, abolitionists were inclined to return to their former party allegiances when they believed that their actions would elect the long-despised opposition or leave them unrepresented because no one was able to receive a majority of the votes. Even the few successes proved ephemeral for the majorities of both parties were hostile to the abolitionist cause and were able to pass repressive legislation over the opposition of the few men elected by abolitionist votes. Sustained unified activity on the part of abolitionists was impossible and successes of one year were followed by crushing defeats the next.[1] Finally, some abolitionists under the influence of Garrison were refusing even to go to the polls to vote.

Stanton was convinced that the fault lay not in political action itself but in the failure of abolitionists to cast aside their party loyalties or distaste for politics. He was hopeful that, if abolitionists were made aware what could be accomplished through their exercise of the franchise, that they would make political action a success. Consequently he decided to draw up an elaborate plan by which political action could be seen to be the path which would lead to the overthrow of slavery. The forum that he chose to present his program was the annual meeting of the national anti-slavery organization meeting in New York in May of 1839.

---

[1] Theodore C. Smith, The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897), pp. 31-32.

When the convention met Stanton was selected to serve on the business committee with Whittier, Cyrus Grosvenor and Garrison. Garrison, possibly sensing what was in the offering, declined to serve. Stanton had done his preparatory work well. He reported to the convention a resolution stating that the free states had sufficient political power to exterminate slavery in the nation.[1] Stanton based his argument on the position that federal limitation on national power, while never to be denied or doubted, did not diminish the delegated powers of Congress. He was the first abolitionist to develop this doctrine.[2]

Stanton catalogued the means that the abolitionists had at their disposal to end slavery. He advanced the traditional argument that the effort to secure abolition in the District of Columbia would foster discussion which would penetrate the South and cause the people there to discern the evil of slavery. Stanton then affirmed the power of Congress to prohibit the interstate slave trade by equating the power of Congress over interstate commerce with its power over foreign commerce. By cutting off the interstate slave trade, Stanton argued, the flow of slaves from the border states to the deep South would be ended. The lower South would be short of slaves, while the border states would be glutted and forced to free their slaves.

---

[1] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1839), p. 12.

[2] Jacobus ten Broek, The Anti-Slavery Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951), p. 68.

Congress also had the authority, Stanton maintained, to refuse admittance to the Union of territories which allowed slavery. If this power were exercised, the South would lose its power to coerce the political parties into acceding to its demands regarding slavery. The dominating influence of the South would be neutralized by the admission of free states in the West.

The individual states, Stanton told his listeners, could deliver solid blows to slavery and Negrophobia by guaranteeing equal rights to all regardless of color and by securing trial by jury to all fugitive slaves and judicial decisions to free all slaves brought into the free states. The northern states could and should protest to the South against imprisonment of colored citizens from the North. The state legislatures could also issue appeals to the Southern states for the end of slavery.

As a last resort, Stanton advised, the North could amend the Constitution to bring slavery within reach of federal legislation. This suggestion was revolutionary. Only two amendments had been added to the Constitution since the Bill of Rights, both before Stanton's birth, and neither of these had to do with a subject so consequential as the abolition of slavery. Stanton maintained that such an amendment would not be an annulment of the bargain made at the Constitutional Convention. The founders thought that slavery was on its way to extinction, he reasoned, and the unwritten Constitution was an antislavery compact. He proposed to incorporate into the written Constitution the ideals of the founders which had failed to be realized because of conditions that they did not anticipate. The task of this generation, Stanton announced, was to complete the work of the founding fathers, to fulfill their aims while resisting efforts to subvert the spirit of the fundamental law. He charged the South with hypocrisy in proclaiming as its aim the preservation of the Constitution while at the same time striking at the liberties of petition and speech which that document guaranteed.[1] Stanton told the delegates:

> We will alter the Constitution and bring slavery in the states within the range of Federal legislation, and then annihilate it at a blow. Do you regard the necessary amendment of the Constitution as beyond the reach of possibility? Sir, the time is not very remote, when, if no new slave states are admitted to the Union, three-fourths of the confederacy will be undefiled with slavery.[2]

Henry's optimism was based on the belief that the border states would soon abolish slavery, that Congress would not admit Florida as a slave state and that Florida would consequently become free to gain admission, and that at least six new states would be formed from the Northwest territory. With freedom thus extended and a northern populace outraged by continued aggressions on their liberties by the slave power, the North would declare to the South: "Thus far shalt thou come and no further, and here thy proud waves shall be stayed." The result would be that "The Constitution will be altered, and slavery and its twin brother Lynch Law, be hurled headlong to their graves."[1] Stanton's resolution was seconded by Lewis Tappan, a gentleman heretofore somewhat reluctant to have abolitionists work in what he considered to be the rotten field of politics.[2]

---

[1] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorrs, 1839), pp. 16-17.

[2] Ibid.

Stanton told the delegates to the convention that the Union could not survive with slavery but that it would survive without that institution. With regard to the fear that the Union would be shattered by continued agitation of the slavery question, Stanton said, "I would not speak too lightly of the Union, but really this threat of dissolution is becoming stale."[3] The South, he proclaimed, dared not secede and evoke the scorn of the world. Secession would mean the creation of a nation based upon the premise that all men were created unequal; Mexico and the countries of Europe, Asia, Africa and South America would disassociate themselves from such a nation. Moreover, England, Stanton thought, influenced by her great abolitionists, would boycott the commerce of the South.[4]

To Stanton there was no reasonable alternative to political action and he intended to pursue it and have the national organization adopt it. Any opposition to what he regarded as settled policy was inimical to the cause. A difference of opinion between the political activists and the exclusively moral reformers, however, was destined to shatter abolitionist ranks. In Massachusetts, by 1839, the once solid phalanx of the abolitionists would begin to disintegrate.

---

[1] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1839), p. 17.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid., pp. 17-19.

CHAPTER VI

THE SCHISM IN MASSACHUSETTS

The unity and youthful camraderie of the abolitionists during the early years of the movement gradually gave way as the anti-slavery enterprise matured. Differences in the characters and philosophies of its leaders became apparent. Disagreements over means led to rivalries which, by 1839, had become open hostility, particularly in Massachusetts. The core of the controversy in the Bay State was the opposition of Stanton and a considerable group of abolitionists, in the main clergymen, to William Lloyd Garrison's espousal of reforms that they considered irrelevant and even harmful to the anti-slavery enterprise. Stanton believed that the extraneous issues which Garrison insisted upon emphasizing in the columns of The Liberator alienated sound abolitionists, frightened off potential converts, and prevented the adoption of appropriately flexible means to accomplish their goal of the immediate abolition of slavery. Garrison's assumption of the role of universal reformer, evidenced in his advocacy of women's rights and perfectionism, convinced Stanton that Garrison should not be leader of New England abolitionism. Stanton did not question Garrison's right to maintain his unorthodox views as long as such advocacy did not cripple the cause. When it became clear that Garrison was blocking progress and that the headstrong editor could not be dissuaded from his espousal of extraneous causes, Stanton advocated the establishment of a new abolitionist newspaper and, later the formation of a new anti-slavery society in Massachusetts.

The controversy in Massachusetts revealed the existence of two factions in the anti-slavery movement. The followers of Garrison were universal reformers who, while they broadened the objectives of the movement, narrowed the means available for their accomplishment. This element, profoundly discontented with the world as it was, was composed of idealists and visionaries. Their adversaries within the movement, typified by Stanton and Birney, were reformers rather than revolutionaries, realists rather than idealists. They were at home in their nineteenth century world and, with the exception of human slavery, accepted its values and institutions. Because they were more firmly attached to the traditions of their culture, they developed a more pragmatic approach to social reform. It was inevitable that the Garrisonians and the practical reformers should clash and that a contest for leadership would sunder the abolitionist movement.

When Stanton first entered the anti-slavery movement, he regarded Garrison as a moral giant, a man of inestimable courage and unquestionable devotion to the slave. The harsh language of The Liberator was, he thought, a result of Garrison's zeal and necessary to the cause. Stanton himself had been vehement in condemning the sin of slavery and the selfishness of the slaveholder. If Garrison's invective was sharper and his attacks more personalized than those of Stanton, the young orator reasoned that the evil which they were fighting justified the most extreme language; the sensibilities of the slaveholders had been so hardened by their relationship with slavery that shock was good therapy. Garrison's intemperate language called attention to the slavery issue. Moreover the harshness of his editorials was not unusual by the journalistic standards of the day. Garrison, Stanton knew, was a better man than his editorials led his detractors to believe. In private conversation he was soft-spoken and a true gentleman.[1]

What Stanton and his friends had failed to see was that the temperament that caused Garrison to hurl invectives at the slave-owners and colonizationists might lead to the showering of abuse upon anyone who questioned his authority or his tactics. The charge of fanaticism had been leveled at all of the abolitionists and the reformers were not inclined to give credence to suspicions about the stability of one apparently so devoted to the cause of the slave. Stanton and his colleagues did not perceive that Garrison's devotion to anti-slavery reform was but one manifestation of the spirit of a social radical.

Stanton, fresh from his experiences in Lane Seminary, showed no sympathy for the efforts of conservative followers of Lyman Beecher, to establish early in 1835 the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race as a counter to Garrison's leadership of the abolition movement in New England. When the immediate abolitionists refused allegiance to this effort to unite them with the colonizationists, the movement collapsed and Garrison remained more than ever a symbol of abolitionism.[1]

---

[1] Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 76.

Garrison's encounter with a Boston mob on October 21, 1835 added to his lustre. His clothes ripped from his back and his life threatened, Garrison responded stoically and was whisked away to jail for his own safety. His courage and the threat of mobocracy combined to win new adherents to the cause. Neither Stanton nor any other abolitionists would have considered rebuking Garrison and giving aid and comfort to their mutual enemies and tormentors.[2]

When, in March of 1836, a committee of the Massachusetts legislature considered a law to curtail anti-slavery publications and meetings, the abolitionists were alarmed. They formed a united front behind Garrison and no proscriptive legislation was forthcoming. Liberty had been saved the crushing blow and the moral was not lost on the abolitionists. War among abolitionists was treason to the cause.[3]

By the middle of 1836, however, the reservoir of good will between Garrison and his more conservative allies began to drain. Up until this time, Garrison had taken a fairly realistic view of affairs. He had anticipated influencing the existing agencies of society, primarily church and state, sharing with Stanton and the other abolitionists the belief that slavery could be eliminated through a great religious crusade led by the clergy.[1]

---

[1] Russel B. Nye, *William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers* (*The Library of American Biography*, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 83; and Benjamin P. Thomas, *Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 195-196.

[2] Thomas, *Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom*, pp. 203-204.

[3] *Ibid*., p. 215.

Stanton, like Garrison, was distressed by the indifference or open hostility of the churches to abolitionism. Although many ministers were abolitionists, the ecclesiastical institutions to which they belonged were unmoved by the evil of slavery. But, whereas Stanton thought that these institutions might be brought to a proper position, Garrison abandoned hope and lashed out against them, accusing them of putting such issues as Sabbath observance above purification of the spirit, according outward appearance a higher position than good works.[2] Offended readers of The Liberator induced Garrison to drop the Sabbath issue, but he proceeded to attack the churches more directly for having turned their backs on the slave and consequently betrayed Christianity. He lashed out at them with invective. The General Conference of the Methodist Church, which had voted a prohibition of the discussion of slavery and urged their clergy to avoid agitating the subject, Garrison called "a cage of unclean birds, and a synagogue of Satan."[1]

---

[1] Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), p. 24.

[2] For Stanton's position see Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1836), p. 29 and The Liberator [Boston], May 28, 1836, p. 87; Benjamin P. Thomas, Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950), pp. 224-225.

Despite Garrison's vituperative attacks on such groups, Stanton stood behind him through the early months of 1837, and urged the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society to financially sustain The Liberator.[2] Such support encouraged Garrison to make even more vehement attacks on the churches and their non-abolitionist clergymen. He soon became involved in a controversy over women's rights which further antagonized non-abolitionist ministers, and disturbed some staunch abolitionist ministers as well.

The Woman Question

The arrival in Massachusetts in the summer of 1837 of Angelina and Sarah Grimke added a new dimension to the raging conflict. The Grimkes were daughters of a South Carolina slaveholder. They had been converted to the Quaker religion and to abolition while in Philadelphia and decided to expend their considerable talents in writing and speaking on behalf of the slaves. Garrison attended one of their lectures in New York and invited them to Massachusetts. At first they lectured only to small groups of ladies, but as their reputation spread their speeches were attended by both men and women in mixed assemblies.

---

[1] William Lloyd Garrison to Anna Benson, February 4, 1837, in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 122.

[2] Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. XXXIV.

This, by itself, was a breach of decorum and when these "promiscuous meetings" failed to confine themselves to the non-sexual aspects of slavery, the conservative clergy of Massachusetts was doubly shocked.[1]

When the General Association of Congregational Ministers convened in mid-July of 1837, it issued a pastoral letter which decried the attempt to force on the church "perplexed and agitating subjects" and reproved the condemnation of clerics whose sense of duty differed from anti-slavery zealots. The ministers advised that women should not appear in public meetings or engage in "doubtful disputations." Garrison responded to the attack with reference to the "moral deformity" of the preachers, whom he called "blind leaders."[2]

On August 2, a "Clerical Appeal," signed by five Congregationalist clergymen of the Boston area, protested against Garrison's abuse, denunciations and "hasty insinuations" about clergymen. On the following day abolitionists at Andover Theological Seminary delivered a censure of Garrison for his damaging remarks and his loading of the anti-slavery cause with "foreign and repulsive" topics. Other attacks followed. Garrison characteristically responded to the buckshop with cannon balls.[1]

---

[1] Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), pp. 105-106; and Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, A Biography of William Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 134-135.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], August 11, 1837, p. 129; and Nye, op. cit., pp. 109-110.

Stanton's attitude toward the controversy between Garrison and the clergy revealed a strong pragmatic element in his nature. Stanton was a man of advanced views, but he was willing to forego an insistence upon absolute right in exchange for success in the anti-slavery cause. Such success required mass support, unity and qualified leaders. Stanton thought that Charles Fitch, David Sanford, Jonas Perkins and Joseph Towne, four of the authors of the Appeal, were sound abolitionists who should neither be lost to the cause nor driven to form a separate clerical anti-slavery society.[2] He spent the month of August, 1837 in Massachusetts and observed that many of the clerical abolitionists were in sympathy with the sentiments expressed in the Appeal and that many laymen were of the same mind. Since neither the clerical party nor the Garrisonians showed any signs of retreating, Stanton pessimistically anticipated a series of charges and counter-charges in which "much bad feeling will be mingled to the great glee of Slaveholders and their apologists . . . and perhaps resulting in the organization of a new Anti-Slavery Association with a new organ--unless the Massachusetts Society will cast off Brother Garrison and the Liberator."[1]

---

[1] Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 137-138, 141; and The Liberator [Boston], August 18, 1837, pp. 133-134.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 7, 1837, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 421.

Stanton found four factions in the Bay State. There were the extreme pro and anti-Garrison groups and two moderate groups, one leaning toward Garrison, although opposing his extremism, and the other leaning toward the clergy but not disposed to support a new organization. Believing that the cause needed all of the factions, Stanton cautioned the Executive Committee to remain neutral and to try to mollify the warring groups.[2] The New York leaders followed his advice although some of them denounced the Appeal as individuals.[3] Nevertheless Stanton's colleagues in New York City were miffed at Garrison's refusal to tolerate criticism without turning it into a cause that endangered the health of the entire movement.[4] Lewis Tappan expressed the opinion of the New Yorkers when he told Garrison: "Had five clergymen in this State made such an 'Apeal,' with reference to The Emancipator or Executive Committee, we should not have thought it 'sedition' nor considered it a duty to expend so much strength in reply."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, September 1, 1937, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 421.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, September 1, 1837, ibid., pp. 421-423.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Francis Jackson, October 11, 1837, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society; Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, September 5, 1837, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Elizur Wright to William Lloyd Garrison, October 10, 1837, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton, Weld, Birney, Elizur Wright, Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt and Amos Phelps unanimously condemned Garrison's obstinacy and lack of decorum, but there was considerable divergence of opinion among them on the perplexing question of women's rights. Tappan, Birney and Phelps held conservative notions of the role of women and were dismayed by the demands for the rights of women made by the Garrisonians. Stanton, Weld and Wright took a different view. Stanton believed that women should enjoy the same privileges as men in their participation in the abolitionist movement, a position he seemed to have taken as early as 1836.[2] Stanton had recommended to the Agency Committee that Angelina Grimke be appointed one of the "Seventy," and gave her steadfast encouragement during the first few months of her agency. When abolitionists like Phelps disputed the Grimkes' right to speak, Stanton backed the ladies and asked Elizur Wright, who was at the New York headquarters, to see to it that the national organization published nothing which would reflect on what the sisters were doing. Stanton even worked out a joint itinerary with Angelina in Massachusetts. When she declined the offer, believing that it might result in more rather than less pressure upon her, Stanton arranged speeches for her.[1] Stanton had no doubts about the capacities of women. He had such a high regard for the talents of Angelina Grimke that he wanted her to handle the doctrine of immediate abolition, to him the sheet-anchor of the cause, if she were selected to address the Massachusetts legislature in 1838.[2] Stanton believed that the cause of the slave would gain mightily from the participation of women. In 1838 he wrote to Oliver Johnson, an anti-slavery editor, concerning a Young Men's Anti-Slavery Convention to be held in Worcester. Stanton advised: "While it should be strictly a Young Men's Convention, yet men of all ages and women too, should be there, in mighty strength, to catch the inspiration, and carry out the fire into all the towns and villages of the State."[3]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to William Lloyd Garrison, September 21, 1837, in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 163.

[2] Charles T. Torrey to Henry B. Stanton, November 11, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library. A gentleman named Hoyt claimed that Stanton spoke for the rights of women at an anti-slavery meeting held in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, in 1836. Torrey, a thorough abolitionist who was conservative on the woman question, asked Stanton, in the letter cited, whether Hoyt's statement was correct. Unfortunately we do not have Stanton's answer.

In theory Stanton was in complete agreement with Garrison on the role of women.[4] However, and this was the crucial point, he, Weld,

---

[1] Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), pp. 193, 196; and Catherine H. Birney, The Grimke Sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Woman's Rights (Boston: Lee and Shepard Publishers, 1885), pp. 187, 194.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, February 15, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Oliver Johnson, in The Liberator [Boston], September 7, 1838, p. 143.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright [December 5, 1839], Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Elizur Wright and Leavitt disapproved of the agitation of an issue which would drive a wedge among sincere abolitionists. William B. Earle reported what Stanton had told him after the New England Convention of 1838: "Henry B. Stanton said, that if this woman question was not dropped, whoever lived to see a year would see a division in the Anti-Slavery ranks; that, in this case, it would not be a few Fitches and Townes only who would secede--it would be the cream and flower of the abolitionists--the great mass of THE CLERGY would secede. . . ."[1]

Faced with the decision of pressing an abstract right and sinking the anti-slavery bark or postponing the woman question until the abolition of slavery was on its way to accomplishment, Stanton chose the latter. The cause of the slave came first. As Weld told the Grimkes in 1837, those agitating for women's rights were putting the cart before the horse; human rights would break the path for women's rights.[2]

Stanton responded pragmatically to the woman question whenever it arose. He took a position consistent with his beliefs when he thought that it was safe to do so. He avoided the issue whenever it appeared that sound abolitionists would be antagonized by raising it.

---

[1] William B. Earle, November 25, 1839 in The Liberator [Boston], January 17, 1840, p. 11.

[2] Theodore Weld to (Sarah and) Angelina Grimke, August 26, 1837, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), I, 436.

Stanton did not vote against the equal participation of women in meetings and did not sign any of the protests delivered by abolitionists against allowing women full equality with men. At the New England Anti-Slavery Convention of 1838, a motion was made to reconsider the admission of women as delegates. When the proposal was handily defeated, Torrey, Phelps and five other delegates signed a protest to be published with the minutes. Although the protest did not deny the right of women to speak and rested on the ground that the subject of women's rights was foreign and injurious to the cause, Stanton did not sign.[1] On the motion to admit women as delegates to the national convention in 1839, Stanton and Elizur Wright abstained. The motion was carried by 180-140. Leavitt voted in the affirmative but Tappan, Orange Scott, Torrey, Phelps, Nathaniel Colver and Birney voted "No." One hundred twenty-three abolitionists signed a protest against the ruling. Stanton and Elizur Wright did not sign.[2]

When Stanton, Chaplin, Goodell and Leavitt wrote the call for the Albany Convention of July, 1839, they were careful to ask for the attendance of "freemen," hoping in this way to avoid the question of women's rights by keeping women away.[3] However, the ruse was unnecessary; the convention was held in Cleveland in October of 1839, among the liberal westerners. Women were expected to and did attend without controversy. Stanton himself made the motion to allow all persons to participate in the proceedings.[1] Stanton's primary aim was the preservation of harmony among the abolitionists.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 8, 1838, p. 90; Charles T. Torrey to William Lloyd Garrison, June 12, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; and Extracts of Seventh Annual Report of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in The Liberator [Boston], February 1, 1839, p. 18.

[2] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1839), pp. 29-30.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], June 7, 1839, p. 91.

No Human Government

Although Stanton disapproved of Garrison's insistence on pressing the issue of women's rights, he did not split with the influential editor because of this.[2] Stanton's tolerance ended when Garrison began propounding "no human government" theories in the columns of The Liberator. Garrison's denial of the right of any mortal to make and enforce laws that were binding on other men was, to Stanton, a paralyzing doctrine which controverted the line that Stanton thought essential and to which Garrison had lent his hearty approval. Garrison was well aware that the primary issue in his dispute with Stanton and his friends was not "the woman question," but the political question. As he phrased it: "The head and front of our offending is, that we present to our readers, every week, three of four columns . . . on the subject of Peace or Non-Resistance, pro and con!!"[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, October 28, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; and The Liberator [Boston], November 15, 1839, p. 182.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright [December 5, 1839], Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], February 22, 1839, p. 31.

In March of 1837, John Humphrey Noyes, a radical reformer and perfectionist, had walked into the anti-slavery office in Boston where he found Garrison, Whittier and Stanton engaged in a heated discussion of political action. Noyes and Garrison had been exchanging letters for the year past and had discovered that they shared many common attitudes toward reform. The March meeting effected Garrison's conversion to the doctrine of perfectionism. Garrison had always been a perfectionist in the common meaning of the term. He was a tidy man who could tolerate no ambiguities, no uncertainties, no loose ends and no errors. Garrison's desire to be perfect predisposed him to the doctrine that man could become literally perfect by becoming an actual partaker of the divine nature. Noyes maintained, and Garrison agreed, that this goal could not be achieved through human institutions. These had to be renounced in preparation for ushering in the Kingdom of Christ in this world. Noyes had declared his independence from any allegiance to the United States government and urged Garrison to do likewise and to concern himself with the universal emancipation from sin, making anti-slavery a tributary to the great system. Garrison told Noyes at their meeting in Boston that his mind was heaving on the subject of holiness and the kingdom of heaven, and he vowed that he would devote himself to their realization as soon as he was able to get anti-slavery off his hands.[1]

Garrison had long been a non-resistant, or pacifist, having refused to condone the use of force by any individual or group to achieve any end. The doctrine of perfectionism blended with these conceptions to form a consistent philosophy. Since the power of government rested ultimately on physical coercion, Garrison might have denounced it on non-resistant grounds alone.[2] Perfectionism, which held that man was capable of perfection without coercion, removed Garrison's reluctance to denounce human government as an unnecessary evil. When Garrison took on the garb of perfectionism, he shed the reformer's guise and displayed himself as a revolutionary. He prepared for an assault upon all human institutions, which, not being of God, were imperfect and incapable of breeding anything but imperfection. Church, state, custom, all were targets of Garrison's artillery. He was determined to cut away all obstructions to the full realization of the capacity of the human soul. In place of the institutions he wished to destroy, Garrison offered the principles of Perfectionism, pacificism and equality of the sexes. He made all reform dependent upon the total conversion of sinners which was to be achieved through the power of idea that few would consider much less comprehend.

---

[1] Theodore Pitts, "Garrison's Failure," American Socialist, June 12, 1879, pp. 188-189; and John Humphrey Noyes to William Lloyd Garrison, March 22, 1837, in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 145.

[2] Ibid., p. 206.

In the summer of 1837 The Liberator began to carry articles and letters advancing the Garrisonian view of human governments. The Liberator's readers were informed that ". . . human governments are the results of human disobedience to the requirements of heaven; and they are better than anarchy, just as a hail storm is preferable to an earthquake, or the small pox to the Asiatic cholera."[1] The pillars of human government were said to be unbelief, ambition, pride, retaliation, self-righteousness, fanaticism and selfishness.[2]

Stanton must have been irate when he read the assertion from the pen of Garrison's close friend, Henry C. Wright, that the American Revolution had been a war against God. "It was a sin in Washington and the blood-stained heroes of the revolution, to oppose the officers of the British government on Bunker Hill. . . ."[3]

It was the opposition to political action that threatened to do the most damage to the abolition cause. Participation in political action was a sin to the Garrisonians. Not only did this assist in giving man dominion over man, but it lent assistance to war-making. A vote cast for the Governor of Massachusetts, for example, helped to select the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of that commonwealth.[1] A good Christian was duty-bound to abstain from political action. As Henry C. Wright explained it: ". . . all human governments are usurpations; necessarily wrong and no one who had entered into the kingdom of Christ should have anything to do with them."[2]

---

[1] "Human Governments," The Liberator [Boston], June 23, 1837, p. 103.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry C. Wright to Alethea, June 25, 1837, in The Liberator [Boston], July 7, 1837, p. 110. Even accepting Wright's code of morality, Washington was guiltless of this particular sin since he did not participate in the battle alluded to.

To Stanton's way of thinking, Garrison was playing into the hands of the slavocrats. They had maintained that the abolitionists were revolutionary fanatics aiming at overturning society. Garrison represented abolitionism to those least familiar with the movement. His reputation made it difficult to convince them that the abolitionists were reasonable men engaged in an enterprise which was not aimed at subverting order but in fulfilling the equalitarian principles upon which the nation had been based. Stanton and his friends were reformers who were begging to be heard; they could not bear the onus which Garrison was forcing on them and the entire movement. Stanton regarded Garrison's philosophy as not only harmful but foolish. He would not spare the time, nor did he have the inclination to contemplate a world in which all men were perfect. Stanton, having rejected Finney's notions of total regeneration, was not inclined to accept a Garrisonian substitute. Finney had only asked that men aim to perfection; Garrison regarded perfection as a glorious reality.

---

[1] William Lloyd Garrison, August 11, 1837, in The Liberator [Boston], September 8, 1837, p. 146.

[2] Henry C. Wright, July 12, 1837, in The Liberator [Boston], July 21, 1837, p. 118.

Garrison's adherence to "the jack-o'-lanthorn vagaries of 'Non-Resistance'" seemed to Stanton a clear indication of the great editor's intellectual instability.[1] Impractical theories and theorists have the "disposition to question all existing institutions mainly because they exist, and to run everything out to extremes," Stanton believed, and they generally become the heads of small cliques and are reduced to being dogmatic, oracular and absurd.[2] Garrison's perfectionism and non-resistance and their offspring the "no-government doctrine," Stanton feared, would throw consternation into the ranks of the abolitionists and allow their enemies to cripple the cause.[3]

Elizur Wright, Whittier, Lewis Tappan, Birney, Charles T. Torrey, Beriah Green, Amos Phelps and a host of others agreed with Stanton that Garrison was dragging down the cause with his espousal in the columns of The Liberator of issues not germane to the anti-slavery crusade.[1] George Bourne, a sound abolitionist who had served as one of the founders of the American Anti-Slavery Society, told Garrison:

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 2, 1839, p. 2; Stanton and most abolitionists made no distinction between Garrison's non-resistance and his perfectionist doctrine, which, as has been indicated, did merge into one philosophy. References by these men to either doctrine include without so stating the entire philosophy that Garrison had developed and espoused.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 2, 1849, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University. When Stanton wrote this letter he had Beriah Green chiefly in mind, although he classified Weld and Jeremy Bentham with Green. Had he written this piece ten years earlier, he undoubtedly would have had Garrison in mind.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to William Goodell, September 1, 1837, in William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, The Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), p. 274; Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 11, 1838, in Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 466.

> I can refer back to many Liberators in succession, in times bygone, when I could have said amen to every syllable which they enounced. Everything directly or indirectly aided to promote the sacred cause. It is but candid to say that, during the whole of this summer, I scarcely have met a number in which there is not something which repels. . . . I would rather have seen a blank spot than many paragraphs which I have read.[2]

Wright said that Garrison's attack on the authority of human government lacked common sense, that his judgment had been blown off by the wind of perfectionism, and that he was doing "more mischief than his neck is worth." Garrison's "downright fanaticism" was offending good abolitionists, Wright told Phelps, and he had better be thrown overboard to save the cause.[3] As Whittier expressed it: "The abolition car moves heavily enough already without dragging after it every thing which our thousand and one reformers may choose to hitch to it."[1] William Jay, son of the distinguished Federalist statesman, rebuked the "frequent attempts to use abolition as a pack-horse to carry forth into the world some favorite notion having no legitimate connection with the anti-slavery cause; . . ."[2]

---

[1] Elizur Wright to Beriah Green, October 17, 1837; Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, September 5, 1837 and October 29, 1837, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; Charles Torrey to Samuel J. May, December 7, 1838, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library; Beriah Green to Amos Phelps, March 29, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; Amos Phelps to Rev. Jonathan Ward, July 11, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; and John G. Whittier to William L. Garrison, in The Liberator [Boston], October 27, 1837, p. 174.

[2] George Bourne to William L. Garrison, October 1, 1838, Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 239.

[3] Elizur Wright to his parents, August 9, 1837; Elizur Wright to Beriah Green, October 17, 1837; Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, September 5, 1837; Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, October 20, 1837, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Attacks on Garrison's course resulted in the decision of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society to terminate the arrangement by which the society financed The Liberator. Since it had no control over the paper, the Board could find no reason for maintaining it. Freed of his responsibility to the Board, Garrison announced to his readers that he intended to broaden the area of reform that was to be sponsored by his paper to include non-resistance and perfectionism.[3] The Liberator of 1838 devoted space regularly to these radical theories.

In the summer of 1838 Garrison proposed the calling of a convention to launch a new national peace society. A declaration of sentiments for the new organization, which he drafted, called for the abolition of all things military and asserted that, since all human governments were upheld by physical strength, "We therefore voluntarily exclude ourselves from every legislative and judicial body, and repudiate all human politics, worldly honors, and stations of authority."[1]

---

[1] John G. Whittier to William L. Garrison in The Liberator [Boston], October 27, 1837, p. 174.

[2] Bayard Tuckerman, William Jay and the Constitutional Movement for the Abolition of Slavery (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1894), p. 84.

[3] Walter M. Merrill, Against Wind and Tide, A Biography of William Lloyd Garrison (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963), pp. 134-135; and The Liberator [Boston], December 15, 1837, p. 203.

Garrison's disavowal of human government and political activity pushed Stanton into the ranks of the anti-Garrisonians. He was convinced that if slavery was to be conquered it would have to be done in part with political means. Stanton was well aware that the spirit of slavery could not be immediately uprooted by law. Nevertheless law was the beginning. As he told the abolitionists at the General Anti-Slavery Conference in London in 1840: "Suppose it be true, that before you can effectually abolish slavery, you must destroy the spirit of oppression in the mind of man; nevertheless, legislation is necessary to deliver the slave out of his grasp."[2]

Stanton believed that Garrison's opposition to political action had an adverse effect on the Brooks-Parmenter election contest in Massachusetts, which was regarded as of immense symbolic significance. Garrison had not been overtly antagonistic to the political activities in Middlesex, but the theories promulgated in his paper ran counter to the duty-to-vote line which Stanton was urging upon the abolitionists of the district. During the campaign Stanton was anxious that an extra edition of The Liberator, containing articles by leading abolitionists, be distributed to the eligible voters, but he was fearful that on the pages intended for circulation there might be a continuation of a no-government article likely to alienate good abolitionists. Stanton asked Phelps to inform Garrison that if any material on this topic were to appear, no copies would be ordered.[1]

---

[1] Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 231-232.

[2] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), p. 480.

The solution to dilemmas of this sort was obvious. Stanton, Phelps, Torrey, St. Clair and other politically-minded abolitionists decided that a new paper, devoted to anti-slavery matters alone, had to be established in the state. To begin a new paper the support of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society was expedient, if not indispensable. That meant that Garrison, who dominated the state society, would have to be challenged directly. Prior to the state meeting, to be held on January 23, 1839, Stanton and his associates attempted to gain the support of several local societies. A resolution written by St. Clair and approved by Stanton, advocating the establishment of a new paper, was made and carried at the Worcester County Anti-Slavery Convention held at Fitchburg.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, January 14, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] Alanson St. Clair to William L. Garrison, The Liberator [Boston], January 25, 1839, p. 14.

The Fitchburg Resolution alarmed Garrison who decided to bring the controversy to public attention. By labeling the Stanton-Torrey movement as subversive and divisive, he hoped to crush it. On January 11, an editorial entitled "Watchman, What of the Night?" appeared in The Liberator, claiming that a conspiracy was afoot, led by "insidious plotters" within the anti-slavery ranks. The scheme, said to be of clerical origin, was to get control of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society "for the accomplishment of ulterior measures which are now in embryo." The plan was to be abetted by the publication of a new abolitionist paper in Massachusetts, the real purpose of which was to drive The Liberator from the field.[1] Garrison thought that the two ministers, Amos Phelps and Charles Torrey were the leaders of the plot, backed by Henry B. Stanton and Reverend Alanson St. Clair. He thought that Orange Scott, the Methodist minister, and Nathaniel Colver, were likely to join the "disorganizers" in their effort to take over the Massachusetts Board.[2]

Garrison's airing of the controversy in The Liberator freed Stanton to challenge the editor directly. The day before the state convention, Stanton, in an attempt to rally support for the new paper, told the delegates to the Middlesex County Anti-Slavery Society meeting at Cambridgeport, that Garrison was an unsound abolitionist because he would not support all measures to destroy slavery. Stanton used the Declaration of the Peace Convention of 1838, which Garrison had written, to illustrate his point.[1] Elizur Wright, who disliked contention as much as any abolitionist, felt that the gauntlet had to be thrown down at the January, 1839 meeting of the organization. From New York he penned a letter to Amos Phelps the day of the convention in which he wrote: "You will have had the chance to screw up Stanton's courage to the sticking point ere this."[2] Stanton's courage proved to be no problem, but the shortage of votes for the new paper was. The Garrisonians were in complete control. A resolution was introduced by the rebels calling for a "cheap, official organ," which would "advocate political as well as moral and religious action." Another resolution suggested that The Liberator be made that paper, or, if not, that the Massachusetts society sponsor a new one.[3] St. Clair, Torrey and Phelps spoke for the resolutions. When Stanton rose to speak, a Garrisonian delegate asked for the floor to read a paper. Stanton graciously yielded, only to have the delegate read a motion restricting the speaker to fifteen minutes! When Stanton finished his abbreviated remarks, the vote was taken and the rebels defeated.[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], January 11, 1839, p. 7.

[2] William L. Garrison to Samuel J. May, January 4, 1838; and William L. Garrison to George W. Benson, January 5, 1839, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], July 26, 1839, p. 119 and August 2, 1839, p. 123.

[2] Elizur Wright to Amos Phelps, January 22, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], February 1, 1839, p. 18.

Stanton then submitted a resolution of the utmost importance to him, and he believed, to the cause. His proposal declared that every abolitionist:

> is BOUND at every election, TO REPAIR TO THE POLLS, and cast his vote for such men as will go to the very verge of their official authority, for its [slavery's] instant annihilation; *and that every member of an Anti-Slavery Society, who refuses, UNDER ANY PRETEXT, thus to act morally or politically, or counsels others, to such a course, is guilty of gross inconsistency, and widely departs from the original and fundamental principles of the Anti-Slavery enterprise*.[2]

In support of his resolution Stanton came forward with a file of *The Liberator* to prove that Garrison had previously advocated political action. He was denied the privilege of reading the evidence.[3] Stanton was extremely agitated and charged that Garrison was recreant to the cause and had lowered the standard of abolition. Whereupon Garrison rose and asked, "Am I recreant to the cause? Who believes it?" A burst of "No's" came from the galleries and the aisles. "Let me ask you a question," Stanton said. "Mr. Garrison, do you or do you not believe it a sin to go to the polls?" "Sin for me!" Garrison replied.[1] Stanton's resolution was then defeated with clamor. Even Alanson St. Clair's moderate resolution, declaring it the duty of every abolitionist "who could conscientiously do so" to vote was set aside in favor of a Garrison substitute, which merely condemned abolitionists who voted against the slave.[2] A resolution to strike from the Annual Report of the society the portion dealing with women's rights as extraneous to the cause was voted down. Orange Scott's resolution to eliminate from the report criticism of Gerrit Smith's plan to reform anti-slavery organizations so as to require all members of the Society to vote was defeated.[3] Stanton, Phelps, St. Clair and Joshua Leavitt then attacked the report which Garrison, as secretary of the state organization, had presented. But it was of no avail. After a long discussion the report, with no-human-government and anti-politics provisions was accepted by a vote of 183-24.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, January 26, 1839, in Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 481-483.

[2] *The Liberator* [Boston], March 8, 1839, p. 29; the capitalization and italics appear in *The Liberator* to highlight what were to Garrison the disagreeable parts of the resolution.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, January 26, 1839, in Dumond (ed.), *Letters of James Gillespie Birney*, I, 481-483; and Henry B. Stanton to Henry C. Wright, *The Liberator* [Boston], April 5, 1839, p. 55.

Stanton believed that the whole proceedings had been conducted unfairly. He told Birney that whenever Daniel Wise, Phelps, Torrey, Scott, or men of that class rose to speak, men would cry out "no matter what they say--no matter what they propose--let us vote them down." Stanton thought that the total defeat of the political activists made the split in the state irreparable. He told Birney:

---

[1] Maria Weston Chapman, Right and Wrong in Massachusetts (Boston: Henry L. Devereux, 1830), pp. 100-104; and Maria Weston Chapman to Elizur Wright, February 10, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 20, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], February 1, 1839, p. 19.

[4] Amos Farnsworth to Gerrit Smith, March 30, 1839, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

> The Society hauled down its flag and run [sic] up the crazy banner of the non-government heresy, and we had to rally around or be ostracised. The split is wide and can never be closed up. . . . Our cause in this state is ruined unless we can separate [sic] the A. S. Society from everything which does not belong to it. That is the issue now tendered to us, and meet it we must, sooner or later. . . . Garrisonism and Abolitionism in this State are contending for the mastery.[1]

Despite their failure to receive the support of the state society, Stanton and his friends persevered in their efforts to begin a new paper and were optimistic about its success. Twenty-two hundred subscribers had been pledged by the end of January. Stanton hoped to be able to secure the services of the capable and experienced Elizur Wright as editor.[2] He journeyed to New York in January to negotiate with Wright, an abolitionist of the old Garrisonian school. The salary offered to Wright was $1500, three hundred dollars more than Garrison received for editing The Liberator. This was considered a worthwhile investment since Wright's identification with the supporters of the new paper would bolster their claim that they were no less enthusiastic abolitionists than Garrison.[1] Elizur Wright, moreover, had no sympathy for those abolitionists who wanted to limit the role of women in the movement. Stanton wanted to play down this issue and refute the charge that the schism was perpetrated by conservative clerics seething over Garrison's advanced position on women's rights. Wright accepted the editorship but thought it advisable to await the conclusion of the anniversary meeting of the national society in New York before assuming his post.[2] In the interim, he supplied about two columns each week to the new paper, although an attempt was made to keep this secret.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, January 26, 1839, in Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1938), I, 481-482.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, January 26, 1839, ibid., pp. 482-483.

The first issue of the Massachusetts Abolitionist appeared on February 7, 1839, with an eagle at its head and the motto "Supremacy of the Laws." Later the heading became "Liberty, the Right of All:-- Law, its Defence." The no-government heresy, it was clear, would find no place in its columns. Stanton, Phelps and twenty-five other persons comprised the editorial board of the paper. Stanton, so the Garrisonians believed, bore the major responsibility for editing the paper. The early issues of the Abolitionist pushed the attack against both Brooks and Parmenter in District 4 and clubbed the Whigs and the

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 20, 1839; Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, n.d. [1839], typed copy, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, January 29, 1839, typed copy, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 18, 1839; Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, January 29, 1839, typed copy, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Democrats indiscriminately on the local and national levels. Although political action was one of the prime subjects dealt with, the editors had to forbear reproof of the no-government doctrine lest Garrison, Henry C. Wright and others of like mind should ask for space in the paper to respond. The editors in that eventuality would have to either refuse the request, laying themselves open to the charge that they opposed the free airing of the issues, or to change the nature of the paper.[1] Stanton and Wright were also agreed that the new paper should avoid controversies with Garrison so as to avoid being labeled an anti-Garrison paper.[2]

Stanton was optimistic about securing new subscribers and in addition to editorial and other duties took a hand in the recruitment.[3] The paper took well in District 4. Stanton and his associates through the paper, pamphlets and speeches, concentrated on this crucial district. The main effort consisted in convincing the voters that Brooks was not sympathetic to abolition.[4] This led to the charge that

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 9, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 11, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton to W. H. Stowell, February 11, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library. This last was a form letter seeking subscribers.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, January 20, February 4, February 9, February 18 and April 11, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Amos Phelps and Henry B. Stanton (to the voters), n.d., Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton was a Van Buren emissary.[1] The charge bruised the abolitionists and the new paper began to place more emphasis on Parmenter's unsuitability, especially underscoring his record of either abstaining or voting wrong when the gag resolutions were considered in the House.[2]

Each time the abolitionists of Middlesex scattered their votes to prevent an election, Stanton and his friends were elated. Stanton noted, however, that with each trial, Parmenter's vote mounted. He urged Wright, who was writing articles for distribution in the district, to pommel the Democrats, but not so hard that Parmenter's friends should cry persecution. The abolitionists kept repeating that the voters had nothing to gain and everything to lose by sticking to their parties.[3]

Finally, in late March, Parmenter succeeded in obtaining a majority by five or six votes. Stanton, who had regarded District 4 as an important proving ground of abolitionist political power, was depressed and angry. He blamed the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, dominated by Garrison, for undermining the efforts of the political anti-slavery men.[4]

---

[1] "No Dupe" to Liberator [Boston], January 18, 1839, p. 10.

[2] Massachusetts Abolitionist, February 28, 1839, p. 6.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, March 12, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, April 2, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; Caroline Weston to Debora Weston, n.d., postmarked February 14, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library; and The Liberator [Boston], April 5, 1839, p. 55.

Stanton had become completely alienated from Garrison, whom he said most of the abolitionists regarded as "overbearing, headstrong, Popish, and arrogant."[1] Garrison's charge of intrigue, which appeared weekly in The Liberator, piqued him. He asked Wright to picture "noble Garrison crawling about to get hold of little pieces of conversations held by someone, nobody knows who, to prove his charge of a grand conspiracy to overthrow the integrity of the A. S. cause! What a stoop--how fallen!"[2] Although Stanton regarded Garrison as petty and contemptible, he acknowledged the editor's influence. Stanton told William Goodell that the no-government doctrine would be subscribed to by hundreds just because it received the sanction of Garrison. The once mighty man, Stanton believed, had been ruined by praise and was "now using weapons we have thoughtlessly placed in his hands" to advance his "wild notion of government" and "infidel theories."[3] The no-government doctrine was the focus of Stanton's ire. He complained to William Goodell: "The no-government doctrine, stripped of its disguises, is worse than Fanny Wrightism, and under a Gospel garb, it is Fanny Wrightism with a white frock on. It goes to utter overthrow of all order, yea, of all purity."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 11, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, February 18, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to William Goodell, February 18, 1839, in William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, The Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), pp. 301-302.

Stanton's identification with the rebels lost him the good opinion of Garrison and his friends. As Garrison expressed it:

> His [Stanton's] conduct throughout has been very reprehensible, and greatly has he injured himself in the eyes of the best friends of our cause. His political hobby has well-nigh ruined him, and put an end to all harmonious action in Massachusetts. My soul is filled with grief on his account. Dearly have I loved him in time past, and great have been my expectations in regard to his future career. But I fear he had made up his mind to be a man of "one idea"--for he seems to be determined to look in one direction, and with a short-sighted vision.[2]

Garrison had identified the essential disagreement between himself and Stanton. Stanton was determined to focus all of his attention on the "one idea," the abolition of slavery, and to attempt to employ political means to accomplish it. Garrison was determined to achieve a multiplicity of reforms, including the abolition of politics. Garrison and his supporters attributed disagreement with their point of view to malevolence. Thus Garrison concluded that jealousy, envy and ambition were responsible for the change in Stanton.[3]

Maria Chapman thought that Torrey, Phelps and Stanton were evil and insincere and more opposed to Garrison than to slavery. She accused Stanton of "premeditated and secret labours" for months in which he "violated the bond of mutual confidence." To her Stanton was a Machiavelli and a plotter and she attributed his fall to excessive ambition. To Debora Weston, Stanton was impudent and vain.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William Goodell, February 18, 1839, in William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, The Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), p. 301.

[2] William L. Garrison to George W. Benson, March 26, 1839, in Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 285.

[3] William L. Garrison to Mary Benson, March 3, 1839, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

Many staunch abolitionists came to the support of Stanton and his friends. William Goodell, the Utica editor, thought that the no-government doctrine was a snare prepared by the devil and deplored Garrison's opposition to political action.[2] Daniel Wise said that Garrison spoke as if he were "whipmaster general and supreme judge of all abolitionists."[3] Lewis Tappan bluntly asked Garrison to leave the anti-slavery cause.[4] Even the gentle Whittier, who tried to play the role of conciliator, was peeved when Garrison compared the Quaker poet to Henry Clay! Whittier's response included an allusion to Garrison's fears:

> I confess that the habit of my mind is somewhat confiding and unsuspicious. No visions of future treachery haunt and disturb me in my communion with my anti-slavery

---

[1] Maria W. Chapman to Elizur Wright, February 3, 1839; Maria W. Chapman to Elizur Wright, February 10, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; Maria W. Chapman to John Greenleaf Whittier, April 4, 1839, Debora Weston to Anne Warren Weston, May 3, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] William Goodell to Henry B. Stanton and Amos Phelps, February 5, 1839; William Goodell to Henry B. Stanton, February 23, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Reprinted from Zion's Herald in The Liberator [Boston], April 12, 1839, p. 59.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], August 23, 1839, p. 135.

> brethren; no shadows and omens of thick-coming disasters throng before me; no ghosts of treason, wearing the similitude of loved and familiar friends, scowl on me from the Shadow World of the Future.[1]

What Stanton and his followers sensed, but did not say, was that Garrison was feminizing the movement, not because he was advocating the full participation of women, but because the Garrisonian emphasis on non-resistance and emotional conversion of the slaveholder emasculated the Stantonian emphasis on an active, aggressive, rational and pragmatic crusade against slavery. The women flocked to Garrison's standard because of the feminine nature of the Garrisonian crusade. Stanton did not fully perceive this and erroneously believed that he could pry loose some of Garrison's followers by an appeal to logic. He did some research in the files of The Liberator and located examples of Garrison's prior espousal of political action. He claimed that Garrison had written in 1834: "This apathy is fast giving way, and very soon the all absorbing question at the polls will be,--'Will you vote for the immediate abolition of slavery in that portion of the country, over which Congress has exclusive jurisdiction.'"[2] Stanton found that Garrison had advised the American abolitionists to use the British anti-slavery experience as a guide. "At last," Garrison had written, "the moral influence of the nation was poured through a political medium--and slavery received its death blow at once." Garrison had urged readers of The Liberator to vote for Amasa Walker, a Democratic candidate for Congress in 1834, had voted for Walker himself and chided the colored voters of Boston for not supporting Walker.[1] Stanton might have bolstered his case for Garrison's inconsistency by referring to Garrison's statement that no man could be a good abolitionist unless he was prepared to engage in political action, made at the Massachusetts society's convention in January of 1837. Garrison had at that time rebuked Reverend Robert Hall for inconsistency in having signed the Declaration of Sentiments of the national society and later opposing political action.[2] Stanton might also have mentioned Garrison's advocacy of a resolution calling it the duty of abolitionists to vote, at the New England convention of 1838.[3]

---

[1] John Greenleaf Whittier to William Lloyd Garrison, The Liberator [Boston], March 8, 1839, p. 39.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Henry C. Wright, The Liberator [Boston], April 5, 1839, p. 55.

Evidence of Garrison's inconsistency had no effect on Garrison or his followers. The Massachusetts Abolitionist, although it was taking well, had failed to shake loose the hard core of support for Garrison. Stanton feared that Massachusetts might be lost to the Garrisonians and that the national society was also in danger. Whittier alerted

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Henry C. Wright, The Liberator [Boston], April 5, 1839, p. 55.

[2] Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. xxxviii.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], June 8, 1838, p. 90; and John G. Whittier to Elizur Wright, March 14, 1840, in Samuel T. Pickard (ed.), Whittier as a Politician, Illustrated by His Letters to Professor Elizur Wright, Jr. (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1900), p. 13.

Stanton a month before the May meeting of the intention of Garrison and Phillips to amend the constitution of the American Anti-Slavery Society so as to eliminate all references to political action, the power of Congress over slavery and the intentions of the abolitionists to influence Congress.[1] The Garrisonians apparently anticipated support of such a resolution from a faction led by Alvan Stewart, the Utica lawyer. Stewart believed that Congress had the power to eliminate slavery by statute. Since Stewart opposed the limitations on Congressional power over slavery expressed in the constitution of the national anti-slavery society, the Garrisonians reasoned that he could be induced to support their resolution, which would expunge all references to the power of Congress over slavery, leaving it to individual abolitionists to determine their opinion on the extent of Congressional power over slavery.[2]

At the national meeting Stanton attempted to win the national society's support for intensified political action. His resolution, declaring that the free states had sufficient power to exterminate slavery in the nation, followed by his eloquent defense of the proposition, was approved. He thought that such approval was meaningless unless abolitionists were required to implement the program by engaging in political action. Garrison, regarding any such commandment as an abridgement of individual freedom, introduced a resolution declaring that the society must not keep out those who, through conscientious scruples, could not participate in all of the activities of the society. Birney tried to table this resolution and to substitute a resolution declaring that a refusal to use the franchise was inconsistent with the duty of abolitionists under the constitution of the society. He failed and Garrison's motion was passed. A resolution calling it the duty of abolitionists to vote was then discussed by Joshua Leavitt, Stanton, C. C. Burleigh, George Bradburn and Birney. It was passed by the narrow margin of seven votes. Most of the New York delegation was in the affirmative; the vast majority of Massachusetts men voted in the negative.[1] The decisions made on political action were inconclusive. Abolitionists had the duty to vote but they could not be kept out of the society, if conscientious scruples prevented them from fulfilling the duty.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, April 3, 1839, Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

[2] Ibid.

The national meeting convinced the political activists that Garrison had to be overthrown. It seemed that Garrison was determined to extend his sovereignty over the national organization. His power had to be destroyed at its base to prevent the no-government virus from infecting the entire anti-slavery community. Stanton, Phelps, Torrey, Orange Scott and others of similar persuasion decided to form a new state society in Massachusetts which would advocate political action and be free of any connection with the extraneous subjects which Garrison had attempted to merge with anti-slavery.[1]

---

[1] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1839), pp. 40-44.

On May 27, 1839, the Massachusetts State Anti-Slavery Society was formed at the Marlboro Hotel in Boston. The preamble of the new organization declared it to be the duty of abolitionists to remove slavery by moral and political action. It pledged the members to seek the "elevation of the character and condition of the people of color, and their admission to equal religious, civil and political rights and privileges with the whites," and to do all in their power "to influence Congress to put an end to the slave trade, and to abolish slavery in all portions of our common country which come under its control." Specifically the abolitionists called for the abolition of slavery, the interstate slave trade and slavery in the national capital, as well as the refusal to admit any future slave state. The first meeting under the constitution was held on May 29. One hundred fifty members enrolled in the organization, the name of which had been changed to the Massachusetts Abolition Society.[2] Stanton did not participate in the actual formation of the society since he was laboring for the national society in New York, but his sympathies were completely with it. He freely gave his advice to its officers, wrote letters to win it the support of prominent abolitionists, and used his influence to have the Executive Committee, of which he was a member, recognize it as an auxiliary, which it did on June 6.[1] Stanton was invited by the officers of the new society to come to Massachusetts to work among them, but he was forced to decline because of pressing business for the national organization.[2] New local organizations were organized as subsidiaries to the Massachusetts Abolition Society in Barnstable, Norfolk, Abington, Middlesex, Essex, and other counties, all approving political action and ignoring the other issues which Garrison advocated.[3] Stanton assisted when he could get away from New York.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, March 12, 1839, April 8, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton to William Goodell, April 8, 1839, in William Birney, James G. Birney and His Times, The Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890), p. 302.

[2] Amos Phelps, June 3, 1839, to The Liberator [Boston], June 13, 1839, p. 95.

Garrison was still an influential figure among the Massachusetts anti-slavery men, particularly in the Boston area. He charged that the new organization was a clerical plot and compared its auspices to the

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, June 1, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, June 18, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress; "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," June 6, 1839, p. 166; and Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, June 10, 1839, in Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 490.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, September 2, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], July 26, 1839, p. 119; The Liberator [Boston], September 27, 1839, p. 153; The Liberator [Boston], November 8, 1839, p. 178; The Liberator [Boston], January 24, 1840, p. 15; and Massachusetts Abolitionist, April 2, 1840, p. 26.

Colonization Society also led by churchmen.[1] This claim was not very convincing to those who knew Stanton. As one abolitionist told Garrison:

> Do you suppose that such men as Birney, and Stanton, the Tappans and hundreds of others, who have suffered reproach for the cause of the slave would be influenced by their attachment to any class of clergymen, to give their countenance to an organization which threatened evil to the cause which is so dear to their hearts? . . . You cannot persuade the community, that such men as E. Wright, Jr., A. A. Phelps, H. B. Stanton, J. G. Birney, A. and L. Tappan, N. Colver, and many other prominent men in the anti-slavery ranks, have abandoned the cause of the slave, and are lending their influence to a clerical faction.[2]

Garrison claimed that the formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society resulted from the admission of women to the New England Anti-Slavery Convention of 1839.[3] That the conservative rank and file of Massachusetts abolitionists did come to emphasize the woman question in their conflict with Garrison, despite the efforts of Stanton and Wright to play down the issue, lent credence to the charge.[4] Stanton considered this to be a grevious error. He told Wright: "I never split with [the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery] Society on that question, and never should. I think they [are] right."[1]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], December 13, 1839, p. 199; The Liberator [Boston], March 6, 1840, p. 39.

[2] Reverend Dr. S. Osgood to The Liberator [Boston], August 2, 1839, p. 122.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], December 6, 1839, p. 195.

[4] Elizur Wright to Henry B. Stanton, October 12, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

What was of prime importance to the schismatics was that Garrison threatened to destroy the broad base of the abolition movement and convert it into a sect eschewing the means necessary to achieve the overthrow of slavery. Elizur Wright responded to Garrison's claim that the woman question was the crux of the conflict with the statement, "In this we all agree that the question of political action is the vital issue."[2] In support of this contention, Wright could have cited Garrison's February pronouncement:

> The fact is, all this trouble in our ranks has arisen from the attempt of Henry B. Stanton, and some half a dozen clerical brethren to make it a moral and religious duty for every abolitionist, entitled to vote, to go to the polls; and if he refuse, on any ground whatever, then to brand him as recreant to the cause of the slave. This is the whole matter in a nut-shell.[3]

In attacking the new organization, Garrison claimed that it "assumes the form, but denies the power of abolitionism," implying that the goals of the movement were self-fulfilling. Stanton could not comprehend such a faith.

The division in the ranks was wide. Each faction thought that it best served the cause of the slave. The Garrisonians thought that politics would contaminate the anti-slavery crusade. The political activists believed that if the Garrisonians had their way, abolition would be submerged in a sea of impractical reforms. Such divergence of opinion meant that each group would attempt to destroy the power of the other and claim leadership of the organized anti-slavery movement. The conflict, therefore, assumed national and international dimensions.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright [December 5, 1839], Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Massachusetts Abolitionist, December 12, 1839, p. 171.

[3] William L. Garrison, in answer to letter from John G. Whittier, The Liberator [Boston], February 22, 1839, p. 31.

CHAPTER VII

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS OF THE CONTROVERSY

As a member of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, Stanton became deeply involved in a conflict between the national organization and state societies over the collection of depression-reduced financial resources. The controversy was to be complicated by the hostility of the Garrisonians toward the political activists who were charting the course of the national society. Dissension within and the drying up of once sufficient sources of revenue were to force the American Anti-Slavery Society to take steps that only exacerbated the situation and a protracted struggle for control of the national society ensued.

Disputes over the collection of funds antedated conflicts within the abolitionist movement over goals and methods. As early as 1836 a dispute between the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society and the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society broke out when funds pledged to the national organization were collected by the Massachusetts society and credited to its treasury.[1] Attempts to solve the problem achieved little success. Early in 1837, Stanton, attending the annual meeting of the Massachusetts society, complained that he, as a national agent, was still being made to turn over funds that were meant to redeem pledges to the national society.[1] On one occasion Stanton tried to bypass the state organization by depositing a fifty dollar contribution to the national society directly in the national treasury. Amos Phelps, a member of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts, learned of this and issued a stern rebuke to Stanton. Stanton found Phelps' remarks "tart and crusty" and "quite unkind." He reminded Phelps that he had paid over to the state society several hundred dollars with no commission charged, although his expenses had totalled more than fifty dollars. Moreover, he explained, the national society had had to pay John G. Whittier two hundred dollars to do Stanton's work at the New York office while he was collecting money in the Bay State. Ninety-five per cent of the money paid into the national treasury by Massachusetts, Stanton told Phelps, was collected by national agents. He said, however, that Massachusetts could have the fifty dollars. "If I am a 'sharper,' and 'go on the principle of disregarding all understandings,' our Treasurer is not, and he will pay over the money."[2]

---

[1] The Liberator [Boston], June 4, 1836, p. 92.

Bank failures throughout the country in the spring of 1837 precipitated a thoroughgoing economic depression which added to the woes of the abolitionists. By the summer of 1837 business was almost at a standstill and revenues coming into the national and state anti-slavery society treasures were reduced to a trickle. Since the national organization had expanded its operation early in 1837, it found itself floundering in debt. By October of 1837, it was overdrawn by thirteen hundred dollars and had to send out an appeal begging funds to support the press, lecturers and other essential services from the state societies which had not been fulfilling their obligations. The failure of Massachusetts to provide its share particularly irked Stanton since four or five of the best national agents had labored in that state and the national organization had freely supplied petitions and publications in Massachusetts. Stanton suspected that the delinquency had been caused not only by a lack of funds, but also by discontent with the neutral course taken by the Executive Committee in the Clerical Appeal controversy.[1]

---

[1] Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837 (Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837), p. vi; and The Liberator [Boston], February 4, 1837, p. 21.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos A. Phelps, September 23, 1837, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

Massachusetts was not alone among the states in its hostility to the national organization. Most of the state societies were squeezed between the county and town organizations and the national organization, which was not only demanding more money to finance its expanding operations, but was also focusing attention on political action in the national sphere. Many state leaders could not understand how the war against the gag rule and slavery in the District of Columbia was contributing to the abolition of slavery throughout the land. They were aware of their declining influence in the cause.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Francis Jackson, October 11, 1837, in printed flyer, "An Appeal to Abolitionists," New York Historical Society.

William Burleigh told Stanton that the jealousy of the Pennsylvania abolitionists of the national society made the collection of funds in the state difficult.[2] William Chaplin told Amos Phelps that the New York society had "a long chapter of grievances" against the national organization and wanted to have full control of all agents laboring in the Empire State.[3] The New York society sent Alvan Stewart to explain its side of the case to the Executive Committee.[4] Stanton who served on a committee to determine the best means for future operations with the state auxiliaries, was sent, after Stewart's appearance, to Utica to explain the views of the national organization to the New York Society. He succeeded in working out an agreement under which the New York organization would assume the management in the state beyond the counties of Columbia and Greene. Each organization was to be allowed to make applications for funds in the remainder of the state, but only through written appeals, not through agents.[5]

---

[1] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 146-152.

[2] William Burleigh to Henry B. Stanton, March 24, 1838, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] William L. Chaplin to Amos Phelps, March 19, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," June 13, 1838, pp. 73-74.

[5] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," May 10, 1838, p. 60; June 21, 1838, p. 78.

The recurring controversies caused the Executive Committee to attempt an experiment. A proposal was made that would allow a state organization to take complete charge of the cause in its area on the condition that the state committee would make a pledge of funds to the national organization. The national organization was to send no agents into an area without the concurrence of the state executive committee.[1] Shortly after the May anniversary meeting of 1838, the Massachusetts Board acquiesced and pledged ten thousand dollars for the ensuing year. Two thousand dollars was to be paid on August 1, three thousand on November 1, twenty-five hundred on February 1, and the remaining twenty-five hundred on May 1.[2] The Executive Committee accepted the installment plan which Massachusetts had submitted.[3]

By mid-June, Amos Phelps, for the Massachusetts Board, was asking for the services of Henry B. Stanton to collect funds. The Executive Committee, persuaded that the first pledge could not be met without Stanton, sent him to Massachusetts where he labored in collecting funds with Orange Scott, Ichabod Codding and other national agents.[4] Stanton achieved his usual success in raising money and turned the entire amount over to the Massachusetts society, expecting, but not receiving, partial payment of the first pledge of the state society. He believed that the Massachusetts organization had no intention of redeeming its pledge and that the Board was hostile to the Executive Committee and aimed at hindering its activities. He favored the immediate termination of the experimental plan and the use of national agents to collect money directly for the national treasury. If a get-tough policy led to the withdrawal of the auxiliarship of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Stanton reasoned, no harm would be done and perhaps some good would be accomplished.[1] A week later Stanton's attitude had softened. It is possible that Birney did not share Stanton's readiness to accept secession. In any case Stanton told Birney that Massachusetts was going to meet its first installment and that the crisis was over for the time being. Nevertheless, he still mistrusted the Massachusetts Board, believing that they were anxious to clash with the Executive Committee. If the national agents were withdrawn from the Bay State, he warned, Massachusetts would probably default in its payment of the second installment.[2]

---

[1] Joshua Leavitt, Recording Secretary of the Executive Committee, to "The Abolitionists of Massachusetts," in The Liberator [Boston], March 22, 1839, p. 47; and The Liberator [Boston], February 22, 1839, p. 30.

[2] Joshua Leavitt to "The Abolitionists of Massachusetts," in The Liberator [Boston], March 22, 1839, p. 47.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], February 22, 1839, p. 30.

[4] Joshua Leavitt to "The Abolitionists of Massachusetts," The Liberator [Boston], March 22, 1839, p. 47.

Stanton prophesied correctly. The Massachusetts organization met its first obligation in August but failed to redeem the second installment when that fell due on November 1. Two months passed and still the money was not paid.[1] Stanton was convinced that the failure of the Board to meet its obligation was part of a conspiracy to seize control of the American Anti-Slavery Society and to make it the engine of Garrison's multi-reformism.[2] The Executive Committee, considering the experimental arrangement of 1838 a failure, resolved that if the second installment was not paid by February 1 the agreement would be abrogated. Stanton and Leavitt were sent to Massachusetts to confer with the Board on the subject.[3] At the conference Stanton and Leavitt presented the position of the Executive Committee. The Massachusetts Board refused to agree to the abrogation of the agreement of 1838. The only concession that they would make would be to allow national agents to collect the balance of the November installment still due--over four thousand dollars--and the amount that would fall due on February 1, provided that the money went through the Massachusetts Society. They were not willing to allow the agents of the national society to collect the remainder of the ten thousand dollars due for the year as Stanton and Leavitt had requested.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James G. Birney, August 11, 1838, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 464-465.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 17, 1838, ibid., pp. 466-468.

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," January 3, 1839, p. 117.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, January 4, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the AASS," January 17, 1839, p. 122; and Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, January 17, 1839, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Joshua Leavitt to "Abolitionists of Massachusetts," The Liberator [Boston], March 22, 1839, p. 47.

After the envoys had reported the results of their discussion, the Executive Committee of the national organization decided that the exigencies of the cause would admit of no further delay and that they would no longer regard themselves bound by the agreement of 1838.[1]

Stanton returned to Massachusetts and found the situation there grave. He told the New Yorkers that he anticipated "a financial war here, to the Knife, and the Knife to the hilt. . . ." Alanson St. Clair and Daniel Wise, agents of the Massachusetts society, had been forbidden by the Board to enlist subscribers to the Massachusetts Abolitionist, organ of the new society in that state. Wise and St. Clair were preparing to dissolve their connection with the old state society when Stanton urged the Executive Committee to hire them as national agents and keep them in the field in Massachusetts. Such an act would incur the wrath of the state organization, but Stanton reminded Birney and Wright, "We are fighting a battle here for our existance [sic] as a National Society. . . . If we lose this struggle for independence, we are gone as a National Society."[2] The Executive Committee followed Stanton's advice and appointed Wise and St. Clair.[3]

---

[1] Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (James Birney, Joshua Leavitt and Lewis Tappan) to the Massachusetts Board, February 4, 1839, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney and Elizur Wright, February 4, 1839, Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

[3] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," February 7, 1839, p. 127.

Wendell Phillips and Henry Chapman, of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, spoke to the Executive Committee for five hours, urging the continuation of the 1838 financial agreement. They failed to budge the committee which reaffirmed its decision to have its agents collect funds directly.[1] Consequently, in an "Address to the Abolitionists of Massachusetts," the Board of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society made a plea for federalism and indicated the danger of lodging too much control in the hand of the Executive Committee, lest at some future time this power be abused. The Board harked back to the neutrality which The Emancipator had shown in the Clerical Appeal controversy, revealing that this old sore had not healed. The Board also cast blame on the policy of political action, claiming that the Massachusetts pledge could have been redeemed if Stanton had not devoted an "unusual amount of time and labor" to the Brooks-Parmenter election contest in District 4.[2] The real reasons for the controversy were manifested and Stanton's suspicions were confirmed.

Francis Jackson, the president of the Massachusetts Board, in his call for the quarterly meeting of the society, accused the Executive Committee of an attempted usurpation of power.[3] Stanton was amazed by what he regarded as the "false and ungenerous statements" in Jackson's call and the "desperate game" that the board was playing.[1] He wanted the Executive Committee to send Birney and Lewis Tappan to the quarterly meeting of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society to present the position of the Executive Committee. While anticipating a "packed jury," Stanton thought that an able defense might win over some people who were prejudiced against the New York committee.[2] The committee acquiesced and sent James Birney and Lewis Tappan to join Stanton in representing them at the meeting. The Garrisonians were, however, in complete control. The motion to approve the action of the Massachusetts Board in the controversy was debated and carried by a vote of one hundred forty-three to twenty-three.[3]

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," February 18, 1839, p. 127; ibid., February 21, 1839, p. 131; and Joshua Leavitt to "Abolitionists of Massachusetts," The Liberator [Boston], March 22, 1839, p. 47.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], March 1, 1839, p. 35.

[3] Francis Jackson to "Massachusetts Abolitionists," The Liberator [Boston], March 15, 1839, p. 43.

Surprisingly, considering Garrison's charge that the New York group had waged war upon the Massachusetts society to cripple its operation and divide the ranks,[4] the Board did pay the whole amount of ten thousand dollars to the national society before the anniversary meeting in

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, March 12, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, March 20, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Anne Weston to Debora Weston, March 23 and 25, 1839, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library; and The Liberator [Boston], March 29, 1839, p. 51.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], April 12, 1839, p. 59.

May.[1] The dispute over finances was continued at the national meeting. A motion by Alvan Stewart to cut in half the amount of money to be raised for the Executive Committee was not passed, but a resolution by Gerrit Smith, strongly advising the Executive Committee not to send into any state agents who were not acceptable to the managers of the state society, was carried by a large majority.[2] Although the motion had been only advisory, the Executive Committee, for the sake of peace and because of the shortage of agents, decided to abide by the resolution and to redouble its efforts in those areas where its agents were free to operate.[3]

The Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society voted on May 13 to pay at least five thousand dollars to the national society, taking for granted that the Executive Committee would send no agents into the state without its concurrence. Stanton then sent a letter to the Board requesting that the national agents, St. Clair and Wise, be allowed to remain in the state. The Board, regarding the two agents, who had sought subscribers for the new papers, as conspirators against the state society, thought Stanton's request a mockery and asked that the agents be removed. They were not withdrawn, however, until the formation of the Massachusetts Abolition Society.[1]

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," May 2, 1839, p. 148.

[2] Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society (New York: William S. Dorr, 1839), pp. 36-39.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to William Tyler, July 1, 1839, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College.

Seeking money to keep the national organization solvent, new recruits to take the field and moral support for the program of political action, the Agency Committee sent Stanton to central New York to attend the anti-slavery conventions being held there in June. Stanton spoke at the Auburn convention with Gerrit Smith, William L. Chaplin and James C. Fuller and then traveled with Smith to Saratoga Springs.[2] He then went with Whittier to Western Pennsylvania to preach the anti-slavery message and seek out recruits.[3] From there Stanton traveled through central New York and New England in search of agents who could help to keep the cause afloat.[4]

The national organization plunged deeply into debt. Stanton sent out an urgent appeal to abolitionists to save the society which owed over six thousand dollars to its creditors in October. Stanton told George Storrs, "Money we must have or give up the ghost."[5] In early November the Executive Committee resolved that the national agents be informed that their salaries and traveling expenses would have to be discontinued because of a lack of funds. Stanton was requested to devote all of his efforts to securing funds to meet the exigencies of the society.[1] While the expenses of the national society had not diminished, the income from the state societies had shrunken immensely. Funds from Massachusetts were about one-fifth of what they had been for the previous year; Connecticut gave less than one-half and New Hampshire less than one-fifteenth.[2] Drafts were being dishonored and the debt was mounting; it was determined that by January of 1840 the society would owe nine thousand dollars.[3] The Executive Committee determined in November that unless the state restrictions on the collection of funds were modified or appealed, bankruptcy would result.[4] Operations, including the petition campaign and the issuance of anti-slavery publications were almost entirely suspended.[5] The society was forced to solicit the donation of goods and produce for the use of the society.[1]

---

[1] Board of Managers to the Executive Committee, December 6, 1839, The Liberator [Boston], February 14, 1840, p. 25.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, June 29, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], July 11, 1839, p. 2.

[3] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," July 2, 1839, pp. 172-173; and John G. Whittier to Moses A. Cortland, July 8, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], July 11, 1839, p. 2.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 2, 1839, September 19, 1839, October 5, 1839, p. 2.

[5] Henry B. Stanton to George Storrs, n.d. (1839), (postmarked October 24) written on "An Appeal to Abolitionists," New York Public Library.

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," November 7, 1839, pp. 204-205.

[2] James Birney to Arnold Buffum, November 8, 1839, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 502-505; and James Birney to J. Miller McKim, November 8, 1839, Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], November 14, 1839, p. 114.

[4] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," November 21, 1839, pp. 208-210.

[5] James Birney and Henry B. Stanton (for the AASS) to Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Abolition Society, November 27, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

When, in early December, an appeal was sent to the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society requesting financial aid or permission to send agents into the state, the Board refused both, maintaining that the Executive Committee had brought its problems upon itself and that it should have acted when the Clerical Appeal appeared. The Board accused Stanton of fostering the "malignant spirit of sectarianism" by establishing the dogma that every abolitionist was religiously bound to vote. He was said to have "spared no pains to make discord and disunion in the Commonwealth." Stanton was rebuked for his editorship of the Massachusetts Abolitionist, a paper begun "in opposition to The Liberator." The Board concluded that "the mischief that he did was incalculable." Lewis Tappan was criticized for calling for division in Massachusetts, Elizur Wright was condemned for his acceptance of the editorship of the new paper, and the whole Executive Committee was censured for sanctioning the new organization in the Bay State. Since the Board had lost all confidence in the Executive Committee, no aid would be forthcoming.[2]

To meet the financial crisis, the Executive Committee called a special meeting of the national organization to be held in New York

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," December 5, 1839, p. 211; and The Emancipator [Boston], December 19, 1839, p. 134.

[2] Board of Managers to Executive Committee, December 6, 1839, The Liberator [Boston], February 14, 1840, p. 25.

City in January of 1840.[1] Garrison complained bitterly over the timing of the meeting. The Vermont Anti-Slavery Society was to meet the same day and the Massachusetts society a few days later. Moreover, Garrison claimed, the winter weather was bad for traveling.[2] When the meeting assembled, forty-four of the seventy-one delegates present were from New York City. A resolution that the national organization should be maintained and the Executive Committee sustained was passed. Birney, who along with Lewis Tappan and Simeon Jocelyn had considered leaving the Executive Committee if some relief were not granted,[3] read the financial report which Stanton, Leavitt, and he had prepared.[4] The report was referred to a committee which was, because of a motion by Stanton, elected rather than appointed to forestall later criticism. The committee reported back a resolution apportioning among the state societies the sum of ten thousand dollars to relieve the Executive Committee of its liabilities. The proposal was approved by the convention.[5]

At the meeting Lewis Tappan introduced a resolution to repeal the agreement that national agents should not labor in a state without the permission of the state society. Stanton voted in the negative. When the motion was carried, Alanson St. Clair, who had voted for it, asked that it be reconsidered. It was then laid on the table.[1]

---

[1] The Emancipator [New York], December 19, 1839, p. 134.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], December 27, 1839, p. 207.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, n.d., Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," January 10, 1840, p. 220; January 13, 1840, p. 221; January 14, 1840, p. 122.

[5] The Emancipator [New York], January 23, 1840, p. 154.

At the next Executive Committee meeting, Stanton and Birney were directed to write to the state societies asking them to raise the amount assigned to them at the special meeting.[2] Massachusetts responded that they could do nothing for the national organization. William Goodell, on behalf of the New York State Anti-Slavery Society, expressed sympathy with the plight of the Executive Committee, but said that New York could not help. Maine, Vermont, Connecticut and Pennsylvania promised to do the best they could.[3]

The Executive Committee decided to sell at a discount the large supply of unsold anti-slavery books which it had in its depository.[4] However, the prospect that the national society could survive on book sales and state contributions was bleak indeed. Stanton, remembering his former successes in raising money in Massachusetts, decided to try that field once more. He wrote to Phelps asking that he be invited by the Massachusetts Abolition Society to solicit funds in the Bay State.[1] Alanson St. Clair, on behalf of the new organization, tendered the desired invitation.[2] Stanton arrived in the Commonwealth in early March. John Greenleaf Whittier humorously inquired, "How dare the 'barbarian' to set his foot upon the soil of the 'celestial empire' and insult the presence of the Uncle to the Sun and Cousin to the Moon?"[3] The Uncle-Cousin, humorlessly, regarded Stanton's mission as further evidence of the hostility of the Executive Committee toward the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. Garrison wrote: "As for Mr. Stanton, we should think, that, in taking a retrospect of all that has happened within [the] year past in the State, he would prefer almost any other field of labor."[4] The Liberator cautioned its readers not to help Stanton to collect money since such funds would be credited to the new organization.[5]

---

[1] The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], January 30, 1840, p. 3.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," January 23, 1840, p. 223.

[3] Ibid., February 20, 1840, p. 231; March 5, 1840, p. 236; and Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the AASS," February 20, 1840, pp. 232-233.

Stanton attended meetings soliciting funds, advocating prudent political action and calling for support of the Executive Committee.[6]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, February 20, 1840, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society, March 5, 1840, p. 235; and Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], February 27, 1840, p. 7.

[3] John G. Whittier to Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], March 13, [March 12], 1840, p. 15.

[4] The Liberator [Boston], March 13, 1840, p. 43.

[5] The Liberator [Boston], March 27, 1840, p. 51.

[6] Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], March 26, 1840, p. 23 and April 2, 1840, p. 26.

Audiences were large but they contributed little money, having given all that they could spare to the state societies.[1]

In mid-April Stanton returned to New York to attend an important meeting of the Executive Committee. A special committee reported what was required to meet the financial obligations of the society.[2] The funds from the book sales had proved insufficient. The special committee recommended that Stanton and Birney be paid their salaries as secretaries of the society up until the day of the annual meeting. Five hundred dollars, taken from the pledge of the Vermont society, was to be appropriated to pay Stanton's expenses to a World Anti-Slavery convention to be held in London in May. Birney, who was to accompany Stanton to London, was to be given three hundred dollars by the national society to add to the five hundred dollars which friends had already given him to help finance the trip. The pledge of the Eastern Pennsylvania society was to be used to pay Leavitt for his services as editor of The Emancipator. The Executive Committee approved all of these suggestions and provided that the remainder of the society's property be transferred to Seth Benedict and Lewis Tappan in trust to provide for the remaining debts. Tappan and Benedict were thus freed from liability that might follow a renunciation of the society's debt by a newly chosen Executive Committee.[1] The committee also decided that The Emancipator, organ of the national society, should be transferred and the subscription books sold to the executive committee of the New York City Anti-Slavery Society with the provision that the city society should publish the paper for at least one year under Leavitt and supply the paper to subscribers who had paid in advance.[2] At the time of the transfer of the paper over one thousand dollars in papers was due to subscribers and the society was in debt to the printers and editors. The alternative to the transfer was the suspension of publication which the Executive Committee regarded as harmful to the cause and unfair to subscribers.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, March 10, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 526n.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," February 20, 1840, pp. 232-233.

The National Organization Is Captured

Although the financial plight of the national organization was an important factor in the decisions of the Executive Committee, it was only part of the story. Stanton believed that Garrison intended to take over the national society at the anniversary meeting in May and to make it over into a no-government society.[1] His trip to Massachusetts confirmed his conviction. He urged Birney to get out all the friends of "old fashioned Constitutional Abolitionism" in New York, Connecticut, Vermont and Pennsylvania to foil the conspiracy.[2] The Garrisonians, for their part, were attempting to get many delegates, men and women, to attend the meeting which would determine the fate of the national society.[3]

---

[1] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," April 16, 1840, pp. 246-248; and Lewis Tappan to Maria Waring, May 14, 1847, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the AASS," April 16, 1840, pp. 248-249.

[3] Answer of American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society to charges of American Anti-Slavery Society Executive Committee (Garrisonian), The Emancipator [Boston], February 25, 1841, p. 175.

The transfer of property, Stanton told Phelps, meant that if the Garrisonians did succeed in getting hold of the national organization, "they will find it a barren sceptre! . . . If the 25 Cornhillers [Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society] wish any Emancipator or any A. S. [anti-slavery] books, they must hand over the cash and print them anew from the stump!" Stanton also suggested that the Massachusetts Abolition Society buy books from the depository, available at a discount, to undersell the Garrisonians and steal a march in the continuing local war.[4] Phelps was probably somewhat shocked at Stanton's frank statements for in his next letter Stanton assured the minister that the actions of the Executive Committee were made absolutely necessary to pay the debts and keep The Emancipator publishing. "There is no trick, ruse, or plot about this matter," he assured Phelps. "The case is one of sheer necessity." Every effort would be made to save the national society, Stanton insisted, by getting good men to the anniversary meeting, but, he added that he personally favored dissolution of the organization and the formation of a new society on the spot.[1] By mid-April the Tappan brothers, Birney, Samuel Cornish and Simeon Jocelyn had come to agree with Stanton that co-existence with the Garrisonians was impossible. LeRoy Sunderland and Theodore S. Wright were also pretty much in favor of dissolution of the society. Of the members of the Executive Committee only James S. Gibbons was fully against dissolution. Gibbons also had voted against the transfer of the property of the organization.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, February 20, 1840, Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; Henry B. Stanton to Charles Torrey, February 22, 1840, Alma Lutz Collection; Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, March 10, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 526n.

[3] Henry C. Wright to George Benson, February 20, 1840, Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told By His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 340.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Tuesday, n.d. (probably either April 7 or April 14, 1840), Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

A request of the Massachusetts Board that the date of the annual meeting be advanced was denied by the Executive Committee.[3] Thus the delegates to the convention in London, if they were to arrive on time, would have to miss the New York event. Stanton, for one, was glad that he would be on his way to Europe, away from the "wretched, doubly wretched meeting."[1] Garrison, however, had no intention of missing the hour of victory. He had enlisted his legions for the descent on New York. Many of the delegates that he brought had never before attended anti-slavery meetings. Arrangements had been made to carry them by ship to New York at a round trip fare that would not exceed five dollars. Food and lodging were to be provided for five dollars a day.[2] The Executive Committee was quite aware of Garrison's plans but they could not prevent their fulfillment. At the March nineteenth meeting of the committee, a proposal to change the Constitution of the society to limit the size of a state delegation was proposed. However, before the amendment could be voted upon at the convention, the Garrisonians would have been seated already and they would surely have defeated it.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Saturday, P. M. (April 11, 1840), Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Saturday, n.d. [probably April 18, 1840], Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] James Birney to William L. Garrison, March 20, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 539-540.

On May 12, with Stanton at sea on his way to Europe, the seventh annual meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society convened in New York. When the delegates appointed Abby Kelley to the business committee by a vote of 557 to 451, Lewis Tappan and Amos Phelps led a withdrawal and organized a new organization, the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. Arthur Tappan was elected president and Stanton and Birney secretaries. Stanton was also made a member of the Executive Committee and appointed a delegate of the new society to the convention in London.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 10, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] The Liberator [Boston], May 8, 1840, p. 75.

[3] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," March 19, 1840, p. 239.

The woman question was the occasion for, but not the main cause of, the separation. Lewis Tappan wrote Stanton that the motion to put Abby Kelley on the committee had to be the test question, "tho' I had hoped it would be on admitting the delegates from Ms Abo. Soc."[2] He later insisted that the division was not and would not have been caused by the woman question.[3] The Executive Committee of the new organization in referring to the separation supported Tappan: "The woman question, as it was called, was not the cause--it was only the occasion of it."[4]

It is certain that Stanton, along with Leavitt, Wright and others who favored the equal participation of women, would never have advocated secession on that issue. However, the multiplicity of issues did confuse observers. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's recollections illustrate this. She wrote: "The potent element which caused the division was the woman question, and as the Garrisonian branch maintained the right of women to speak and vote in the conventions, all my sympathies were with the Garrisonians though Mr. Stanton and Mr. Birney belonged to the other branch, called political abolitionists."[1]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to Henry B. Stanton, May 19, 1840, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress; The Emancipator [New York], May 22, 1840, p. 14; May 29, 1840, p. 18; and Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], June 4, 1840, p. 62.

[2] Lewis Tappan to Henry B. Stanton, May 19, 1840, Lewis Tappan Papers.

[3] Lewis Tappan to Maria Waring, May 14, 1847, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] The Emancipator [Boston], February 25, 1841, p. 175.

Mrs. Stanton's view, expressed over a half century after the event, was probably influenced by her later activities in the cause of women's rights. What is interesting is that she saw the conflict as one between pro-politics and pro-women forces. She knew better than to classify the non-Garrisonians as anti-women. If it takes two sides to make a quarrel, then the woman question will not do as a sufficient explanation of the division. The question of women's rights was but a part of the package of "other issues" which separated the Garrisonians and their antagonists. Foremost among the "other issues" was the political question. It was this subject that generated the greatest intensity of feelings. Wendell Phillips, a stanch Garrisonian, thought that it was politics, not the woman question, which occasioned the division in the society.[2]

Henry B. Stanton was one of the two or three men most responsible for challenging the position of the Garrisonians. He challenged them because they had expanded the ends and restricted the means available to the anti-slavery crusade. By 1840 Stanton was firmly convinced that moral abolition alone could not uproot slavery; political action was necessary. He believed that "Nothing but the arm of power can wring the freedom of the negro from the grasp of the slave-holder."[1] Such power could be achieved only by acting in the political sphere. If Garrison's "no human government" doctrine had not directly challenged this line of action, Stanton might have been willing to co-exist. For Stanton and those who thought like him, no rapprochement was possible. Lewis Tappan, in explaining to Weld that the split did not result primarily from the woman question best summarized the real reasons for the division: "It was chiefly because Garrison and his party . . . foisted upon the Amer. Anti Soc the woman question--no government question--etc. and the bad spirit shown by the Liberator etc."[2]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 78-79.

[2] Massachusetts Abolitionist, August 6, 1840, p. 99.

The Garrisonians, in control of the national society, replaced the old Executive Committee with a new slate that included three women and appointed Nathaniel P. Rogers, Charles Remond, Lucretia Mott and Garrison as delegates to the World Convention in London.[3] Before leaving for Europe, Garrison made an effort to bolster his claim to be the true representative of the American Negro among the abolitionists. At a meeting of colored citizens in New York, a resolution of confidence in the delegates of the American Anti-Slavery Society was introduced. This was meant to exclude Stanton and Birney, then delegates of the newly formed American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. However, an amendment was proposed to wish good fortune to all of the delegates from the United States. Garrison thereupon objected to having his name associated with the new organization men whom he did not regard as abolitionists. Since the meeting ran late, no motion at all was passed, but Reverend Charles B. Ray, who attended the meeting, assured Stanton that the amendment would have passed despite Garrison's opposition, had time allowed.[1]

---

[1] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London From Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), p. 424.

[2] Lewis Tappan to Theodore Weld, May 26, 1840, Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] The Liberator [Boston], May 22, 1840, p. 82; and The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], May 14, 1840, p. 2.

Henry Stanton was literally as well as figuratively distant from Garrison when the national organization divided. The Montreal, a packetboat bound for London, had departed from New York harbor on May 11 with Birney, Stanton, and Stanton's bride of ten days, the former Elizabeth Cady, among the passengers.[2]

Stanton had met Elizabeth, a cousin of Gerrit Smith's, during a visit with the philanthropist at his Peterboro, New York home in

---

[1] Charles B. Ray to Henry B. Stanton and James Birney, May 20, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 575-577; Joshua Leavitt to James Birney, May 19, 1840, ibid., pp. 574-575; and Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], May 28, 1840, p. 59.

[2] James Birney, Diary, May 11, 1840, James Birney Papers, Library of Congress.

October of 1839. With him had been the beautiful daughter of Alvan Stewart, the Utica abolitionist. Rumor had it that they were engaged, or so at least it was understood by Elizabeth. She was delighted to learn that the rumors were incorrect for she was impressed by the "fine looking, affable young man with remarkable conversational talents." Henry commuted from Peterboro to anti-slavery meetings in Madison County and Elizabeth often attended these meetings, captivated by the "thrilling oratory and lucid arguments" of the "most eloquent and impassioned orator on the antislavery platform."[1]

Elizabeth was, at the time she met Henry Stanton, recovering from a severe disappointment. The man whom she loved, Edward Bayard, had married her sister, Tryphena. Henry seemed to be able to fill the void in her life, appealing to both her head and her heart.[2] Henry too was smitten. When away from Peterboro, he could not keep his mind off Elizabeth and found himself inadvertently dropping her name in conversations, making it difficult to keep the secret.[3] A secret the romance had to be since Elizabeth's father and other relatives frowned upon the attachment. Judge Daniel Cady had thought that his nephew, Gerrit Smith, was too radical, and looked askance at

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, "Reminiscences," I, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), pp. 18-22.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 1, 1840, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Elizabeth's all too frequent trips to Peterboro. To have an abolitionist for a son-in-law would be the last straw![1]

By December the opposition of Elizabeth's relatives and friends was taking effect.[2] Henry was persistent, however, and wrote letters professing his deep love for Elizabeth. He compared his plight with that of Hamlet; Elizabeth, of course, was the fair Ophelia and Judge Cady was Polonius.[3] The parallels were far from exact, however. Stanton was not a prince; he was obliged in fact to prove to the judge that he would be a good provider. In a letter undoubtedly meant for his prospective father-in-law, he stated his financial qualifications. He had, he related, been self-sufficient since the age of thirteen, had refused all offers of financial aid, and had succeeded in assisting two of his brothers to acquire liberal educations while he himself had studied for eight years. Henry boasted that he had saved three thousand dollars in cash from his work with his hands, tongue, pen and "the ingenuity of a New Englander, trained up by a mother who is the great-great-great granddaughter of a man who set his foot on Plymouth Rock in 1620."[1]

---

[1] Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), p. 20; "Elizabeth Cady Stanton," speech of Harriot Stanton Blatch at Buffalo Convention, 1915, Anniversary Session of Pioneers, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 15, 1839, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie, Syracuse University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 1, 1840, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Henry was convinced that he could offer Elizabeth a worthwhile life and prevent her wasting her fine powers in "the giddy world of fashionable follies." A person "of so superior a mind and enlarged heart" should be doing something for the salvation of the world, Henry opined. He feared, however, that Elizabeth's return to her home environment would ruin his chances.[2] He was quite correct, for upon returning to Johnstown, Elizabeth broke the engagement, repenting her former haste, but hoping that when family hostility had died down, they might resume their former relationship.[3]

Stanton was undaunted. He told Elizabeth that he was going to Europe to attend the World Anti-Slavery Convention. They could marry then and honeymoon in Europe or put off the marriage until Henry's return. Elizabeth decided that she did not want to be left in the hands of her opposing friends and accepted Henry's proposal of marriage.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 4, 1840, Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 4-5.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, February 27, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, March 4, 1840 and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Mrs. Gerrit Smith, March 4, 1840, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Tuesday, n.d., Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library; Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), p. 22.

The problem of money loomed. Weld employed Lewis Tappan to help:

> What can be done for poor Stanton? Almost the whole of his salary for the past two years is due him, and he is now in circumstances which imperatively demand the whole of it or nearly all by the first of May. . . . Poor Stanton has worked night and day most indefatigably; thousands and tens of thousands has he collected for the cause and now in his great extremity, the most perplexing and painful one of his life, to be obliged to forego his hardly [sic] earned dues is more than most could bear.[1]

The transfer of books from the depository of the national organization to Stanton was decided upon. Stanton was given enough books at half the list price to cover the salary owed him and then had to sell what he could for cash.[2] This accomplished, the plans for the wedding could proceed. Stanton told Gerrit Smith that he expected to visit Peterboro in the near future with "a very dear friend." He jested, "We may come in chains--and much as you abhor thraldom, we shall totally dissent from any proposition of Emancipation, immediate or gradual, present or prospective!"[3]

The wedding was scheduled for April 30 but Henry's ship was stranded on a sandbar and the ceremony was postponed for one day. The Scotch clergyman, Reverend Hugh Maire, urged that the marriage not take place on Friday, regarded as an unlucky day, but the couple insisted. Strong-minded Elizabeth demanded that the vow of obedience be omitted from the ceremony. This being done, they were wed and prepared for a honeymoon in Europe.[1]

---

[1] Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, April 10, 1840, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), II, 828.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, Tuesday, n.d., Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 17, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Since the wife of Henry B. Stanton would be expected to be knowledgeable on the subject, Birney and Stanton plied Elizabeth with anti-slavery doctrine during the trip. Birney, the perfect southern gentleman, scolded the high-spirited Elizabeth for her indiscretions. One of her egregious sins was calling her husband "Henry" instead of "Mr. Stanton" in public. Despite the criticism and his conservatism on the proper role of women, Elizabeth liked Birney.[1] The party landed at Torquay, proceeded to Exeter and Bath and then to London where the great convention was to assemble on June 21.[2]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 71. Elizabeth Stanton recalls that the marriage took place on May 11. This was, however, not a Friday, but a Monday. Henry wrote a letter to Gerrit Smith from New York on May 10. The couple was already married then. Elizabeth was obviously wrong as to the date. James G. Birney's diary entry of May 11 says that the couple was married on May 1 and that he saw the bride for the first time in New York at the Waverly House on May 4, James Birney Papers, Library of Congress. May 1 was a Friday. Stanton's letter of April 17, 1840 mentioned May 2 as the day he expected to visit Gerrit "in chains," Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University. Theodore Weld told Lewis Tappan that Stanton needed his pay by May 1. Theodore Weld to Lewis Tappan, April 10, 1840, Gilbert H. Barnes and Dwight L. Dumond (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), II, 828. The Massachusetts Abolitionist reports that the wedding took place on June 1. Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], June 4, 1840. The couple were at sea by that date. Elizabeth is undoubtedly correct about the Friday and the Massachusetts Abolitionist about the first, although it should have been the first of May. Henry has the correct date in Random Recollections, p. 74, as does the Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], May 14, 1840, p. 2.

The World Anti-Slavery Convention

The purposes of the convention were to exchange information on the results of emancipation in the West Indies; to discuss the nature and extent of slavery and the slave trade in the world; and to determine the best measures of achieving the abolition of slavery and the welfare of the emancipated population.[3] The venerable Thomas Clarkson, the only surviving member of the committee instituted in 1787 to consider the abolition of the slave trade, was called upon to preside when the assembly convened in Freemason's Hall. In his remarks to the delegates, Clarkson called for courage and perseverance by the abolitionists in bringing home the guilt of slavery to those who profit by it.[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 72-73; Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), I, 69-70; Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), p. 24; Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, August 3, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Stanton and Blatch (eds.), op. cit., pp. 72-74; Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, July 24, 1840, p. 2.

[3] "Announcement of the General Anti-Slavery Convention" upon which is written Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 17, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Harmony was endangered at the beginning of the session when Wendell Phillips introduced a motion to admit the women delegates who had traveled to London. Stanton was once more faced with an issue that pitted his conscience against his pragmatic nature. His vote is not recorded, but Garrison said that Stanton had voted to admit the women.[2] Elizabeth agreed as she recalled the convention many years later. She added: "my husband made a very eloquent speech in favor of admitting the women delegates."[3] No other evidence of this speech is available, and had Henry so spoken, there could be little doubt about how he voted at the convention. Birney, however, informed Tappan that Stanton had assured him that he had voted in the negative.[4] Elizabeth Neall claimed emphatically that Stanton had voted against the resolution.[5] If this is true, Stanton was undoubtedly trying to promote harmony and avoid the division of pro-women Americans and anti-women Europeans. In any case, the motion was defeated by a large majority and the women were consigned to the gallery where Garrison, fresh from his victory in New York, joined them. He won the admiration of Elizabeth, whose opinion on the woman question was reinforced by her conversations throughout the convention with Lucretia Mott, her neighbor in the gallery.[1]

---

[1] The Times [London], June 13, 1840, p. 7.

[2] Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 383.

[3] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 79.

[4] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, August 29, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 596.

[5] Elizabeth Neall to Elizabeth Whittier, November 18, 1840, Pickard-Whittier Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Stanton was selected to serve as one of the secretaries of the convention. During the proceedings he spoke often, and convincingly, presenting a description of American slavery and a program for achieving its extinction. Stanton's most significant remarks related to the means that the British could adopt to assist in putting down American slavery. Stanton enumerated three instruments available: the press, the churches, and economic coercion.

The American being a "reading people," Stanton called upon Great Britain, "the fountain-head of our literature" to supply the American public with books, reviews, newspapers and magazines saturated with anti-slavery principles, which would reach ears closed to the message of American abolitionists and "strike their hearts."[2]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 81-84.

[2] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London From Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), pp. 124-126.

Shocking his hearers with examples of the support given to slavery by ministers and church bodies in America, Stanton urged a strong rebuke be delivered by all religious bodies and highly esteemed individual clergymen to the ecclesiastical defenders of slavery in America. If this were done, Stanton told the delegates, slavery in America would be doomed.[1]

The third means by which Great Britain could hasten the demise of slavery, Stanton told the delegates, was an economic boycott of cotton grown in the slave-holding states. He urged the British to buy their cotton from the East Indies and "pay him who digs the cane-hole . . . rather than his robber and oppressor." Slavery existed, Stanton claimed, because it was profitable. It was supported by northern merchants who sold products to the slaveholders, while southerners sustained the institution because their consciences were paralyzed by a greed for profits. Why did the Virginia legislature of 1831-1832 not carry through the proposal for abolition? Because, "while that legislature was in session, news arrived from this country that cotton had risen 33 1/3 per cent in the Liverpool market." What occasioned the mob violence of 1835? "In 1835 cotton rose 15, and 25 per cent in the Liverpool market." Great Britain, by annually purchasing four hundred fifty million pounds of cotton, thirteen million dollars worth, from the slave states was fostering slavery.[1]

---

[1] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), pp. 294-299.

Stanton told the delegates: "The American slave-holder knows that all which is valuable in public sentiment of the world is against him; that the religion of the world is against him; that the spirit of the age is against him; that the mighty genius of reform . . . is against him. But men with full pockets and empty consciences will defy the genius of everything."[2]

Stanton also explained the northern opposition to abolition in economic terms: "The Southern states are the growers for the country; and the north the manufacturers. The south is able, from the purchase of their cotton by Great Britain, to buy our wares and merchandise in the north; and hence it comes to pass, that the northern people are averse to abolition, for fear of offending their customers in the south."[3]

The American abolitionists had to resist despair and disallow futility, cognizant of the consequences of inaction. "If we do not abolish slavery," Stanton told the delegates, "slavery will abolish and utterly destroy the most splendid fabric of government that ever lifted its majestic dome to the admiration of the human race."[1] If the malignancy was not excised the whole American fabric would be consumed. Slavery was an expansive institution. Even the British need fear the extension of the evil. "There are," he told the delegates, "800,000 free blacks, British subjects in the West Indies; and if you do not take care the Americans will, in a few years get hold of them all."[2]

---

[1] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), pp. 420-424.

[2] Ibid., p. 422.

[3] Ibid., p. 424.

The London Convention ended on June 24, with a session presided over by the Duke of Sussex, uncle to the Queen.[3] Stanton had been accepted by English reformers as one of the chief voices of reform in America. He had won the respect and admiration of Clarkson, Brougham, O'Connell, Buxton, Bright and a host of other abolitionist luminaries. His rank with the great reformers was immortalized in a painting of the convention done by Benjamin Robert Haydon. Many years later, Henry Stanton's son, Robert L. Stanton, procured, at his father's request, an etching of the painting, which he proudly displayed in his law office as a remembrance of the London convention.[4]

---

[1] Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840 (London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841), p. 421.

[2] Ibid., p. 473.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 4, 1840, p. 2.

[4] Robert L. Stanton to Robert B. Stanton, December 25, 1879, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

Henry and Elizabeth enjoyed the sites of London while the convention was in session. They saw St. Paul's Cathedral, the British Museum, the Tower prisons, Windsor Castle, St. James Palace, the Zoological Gardens, Parliament and other notable sites. They drove through the parks and sailed up and down the Thames.[1] After the convention had ended, the couple, with Sarah Pugh and Abby Kimber, journeyed to France where they remained for two weeks. They sailed on the Seine, visited the Palace of the Tuileries, the Hotel des Invalides, and other historic spots.[2] While in France, Henry conferred with St. Anthone, Isambert, whom he had met in London, and other distinguished abolitionists, and attended two anti-slavery conventions.[3]

Upon returning to England, Stanton started out on a tour which eventually took him to Scotland and Ireland. The purpose of the tour was to acquaint people of all ranks and stations with the evils of American slavery, to engage their moral support and induce them to exercise all the influence which they could muster through their government, their churches, and their press on the American people. Stanton wanted to persuade his audiences that the bulk of abolitionists in America were reasonable men, concerned primarily with anti-slavery reform and willing to employ moral and political means to accomplish this single objective. Finally Stanton wished to combat the colonization scheme, which he had once called "this leprous shoot from the dark soil of human depravity."[1] The colonizationists, who held that the solution to the problem of slavery was the banishment of its victims, had received two previous setbacks in England. Charles Stuart had effectively combatted their arguments upon his return to England in 1831, and Garrison had secured a condemnation of colonization by the chief English reformers during his visit in 1833.[2] Nevertheless, advocates of the plan to send American Negroes to Africa continued their efforts to win over British reformers. Ralph Randolph Gurley, an official of the American Colonization Society, was in England at the time of the convention. Despite his claims to the contrary, Gurley appeared to make little headway. Stanton and Birney, determined to demonstrate the abhorrence of British abolition leaders for the colonization plan, wrote a letter to Sir Thomas Buxton, who had been one of the earliest and most active anti-slavery members of Parliament, asking him to state his position on colonization.[1] Buxton was the chairman of the inappropriately named organization, the Society for the Colonization of Africa, and had, therefore, been claimed by Gurley as an advocate of the program of the American Colonization Society. In answering the letter from the American abolitionists, Buxton explained that his society was not encouraging emigration to Africa; rather its interest was in civilizing that continent. Buxton stated categorically that he was an immediate abolitionist and could not identify himself with the American colonizationists. A copy of Buxton's statement was sent to Gurley.[2] Stanton assured his comrades at home that the visiting American abolitionists had successfully combatted colonization, which held no allurement for the British people.[3]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 85.

[2] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, July 23, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 583-585; and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, op. cit., pp. 92-95.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 93; and The Emancipator [New York], August 20, 1840, p. 66, based on letter of Henry B. Stanton, July 28, 1840, not printed.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, June 29, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], July 11, 1839, p. 4.

[2] Gilbert H. Barnes, The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964), pp. 36-37, 53; and Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1955), p. 66.

Garrisonism was not a formidable adversary to the new organization men as they toured England. The practical British abolitionists needed no encouragement to espouse and defend political action since this was the means that they had employed to secure the end of slavery in the empire. The British anti-slavery men were also unimpressed by, if not hostile to, the efforts of the Garrisonians to link women's rights and other reforms with anti-slavery. The new organization approach to abolitionism was much more akin to British experiences and sensibilities than the dogmatic and Utopian approach which Garrison represented. Most of the British abolitionists, John Scoble believed, were in total agreement with the new organization men across the sea.[1] The Garrisonians did not abandon the field, but their appeal was fairly insignificant. Not until the end of 1840 did the old organization make a concerted effort to challenge Stanton and Birney.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton and James Birney to Sir Thomas Buxton, September 5, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 599-600.

[2] Thomas Buxton to James Birney and Henry B. Stanton, October 14, 1840, with enclosure of October 9, 1840, ibid., pp. 606-611.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], October 22, 1840, p. 102, based on letter from Henry B. Stanton, September 28, 1840, not printed.

The Stantons set out on the first leg of the journey through the principal towns of middle and northern England in the company of Birney and John Scoble, Secretary of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. The Americans were impressed that distinguished Englishmen, including barons, bishops, mayors and army officers, took part in the meetings. Elizabeth later recalled that none of the prejudice against color which was so inveterate among the American people was found in that country.[2] The audiences would cry "shame!" "horrible!" and "hear, hear," as the speakers related common facts of slavery which had failed to impress the American mind. The British were amazed and indignant to learn that American ministers of all denominations declared that slavery was in accordance with the Bible, maintained "negro pews" and did not serve communion to Negroes and whites at the same time. The speakers were received kindly and warmly everywhere in England, where, Elizabeth commented, it was not a disgrace to be an abolitionist, but demanded courage not to be one.[1]

---

[1] John Scoble to Amos Phelps, July 24, 1840, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), p. 87.

Stanton drew large audiences. At Birmingham between three and four thousand persons attended a meeting. By the beginning of August he had addressed meetings in Manchester, Leeds, Hull, Cambridge, Leicester, Northampton and York.[2] After a short stay in London, the Stantons were off again, this time with George Alexander, treasurer of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, to visit cities south of the capital in Kent and Sussex.[3] Then Stanton toured the eastern part of England with John Scoble.[4]

At Ipswich, Thomas Clarkson chaired the meeting and the old man astonished the audience by speaking for twenty minutes. Following Clarkson, Stanton made a speech which, John Scoble reported, "was a powerful one, and which drew from the audience alternately tears and bursts of indignation."[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton (and Henry B. Stanton) to Gerrit Smith, August 3, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University; and Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton (and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) to Gerrit Smith, August 3, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; George Thompson to Richard Webb, August 9, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library; and The Emancipator [New York], August 20, 1840, p. 66.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 15, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 594-595; and James Birney to Lewis Tappan, August 29, 1849, ibid., pp. 596-597.

[4] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, September 11, 1840, ibid., pp. 601-602.

The Stantons visited Playford Hall, Clarkson's home, which had been constructed the year that Columbus discovered America. The old man discussed reform in England and the condition of America. His praise for the United States was great but he bemoaned the existence of slavery there and the action of the mobs. Clarkson showed Stanton the book of proceedings of the first committee for the abolition of slave trade formed in 1786. The day spent with Clarkson was one of the high spots of the European trip.[2]

By early fall the Stantons had traveled in thirty of the forty English counties and visited all of the principal towns except Liverpool, Bristol, Oxford and Sheffield. Large audiences attended most of the meetings.[3] They had been present at numerous reform meetings which dealt with such issues as the corn laws, temperance and the treatment of the people of India.[1] And the Stantons had visited historic sites throughout England, including Stratford-on-Avon, and Huntingdonshire, home of the "far-sighted and high-minded" Oliver Cromwell, whom Stanton regarded as a great champion of freedom of conscience.[2]

---

[1] John Scoble to John Tredgold, September 22, 1840, Annie H. Abel and Frank J. Klingberg, A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858, Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (Lancaster, Pa.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1927), p. 72.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, October 23, 1840, p. 2.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

On September 28, the Stantons left for Scotland, which Henry called "old England's Vermont." They spent two weeks along the way before being joined by Scoble and Birney. There the couple rode donkeys and sailed on the Scotch lakes. The adventurous pair climbed Benvenue, a three thousand foot mountain, without a guide, going for twelve hours on foot with nothing to eat. They visited Dunsinane, the palace of Scone, Kenilworth Castle, Newstead Abbey and the homes of Lord Byron, Robert Burns and Sir Walter Scott.[3]

When Birney and Scoble arrived successful meetings were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh,[4] which Stanton believed to be "the only city in Great Britain."[1] Stanton had high praise for the Scotch love of freedom of opinion and their defense of liberty and was impressed with the politeness of the Scotch which he contrasted with the rudeness of the English.[2] However, he was shocked by the extreme poverty of the lower class in Glasgow, and regretted the failure of the Scotch to pass a poor law. "Shame on Puritanic Scotland," he exclaimed.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, August 14, 1840, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., October 6, 1840, p. 2; November 6, 1840, p. 2.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University; Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 98-103; and Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, November 17, 27, December 4, 22, 1840, February 2, 9, 12, 1841, p. 2.

[4] Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], December 10, 1840, p. 172; and John A. Collins to Maria W. Chapman, December 3, 1840, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

Stanton and Birney next went to Ireland. In Dublin, Birney spoke proudly of his Irish descent. Stanton followed, saying that he was not of Irish descent, but that if love of liberty was a test of Irishism, then he was as much an Irishman as any among them.[4] Henry stressed to a Dublin audience the importance of sending to American shores emigrants who were imbued with anti-slavery sentiments since from five to six thousand Irish votes in New York could turn the election in favor of an anti-slavery candidate. "There is a saying amongst us," Stanton told his Irish audience, "as goes the city of New York, so goes the state of New York; as goes the state of New

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, November 20, 1840, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., November 20, December 1, December 4, 1840, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., January 29, 1841, p. 2.

[4] Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], November 26, 1840, p. 162. Information was based on the Dublin papers of October 27 and 28.

York, so goes the North American Union."[1] Holding the balance of power between the major parties was still the main theme of Stanton's political thought.

While in Dublin the Stantons visited at the home of Daniel O'Connell. Both Henry and Elizabeth were impressed by "Dan of Derrynane." Henry had been fascinated by O'Connell's speeches in Parliament. "Every cord of the human bosom lies open to his touch, and he plays with its passions and emotions with a master's skill," he wrote. O'Connell, it was said, could turn an audience from tears one moment to laughter another. In his denunciations he was lucid, sarcastic and terrible. When his indignation was fully roused, he would blaze like a volcano, but he was eloquent and graceful in gesture and had the appearance of an "East-India sea captain."[2]

Stanton found Ireland to be a "complication of contradictions." Much of Ireland's woes, he concluded, resulted from its status as a dependent province of England. Ireland was, in fact, a slave of England.[3] Poverty there, Stanton maintained, was caused by a grasping landlord aristocracy, an indolent priesthood, onerous taxation, an absence of protection for local industry, and intemperance.[1] Nevertheless Stanton found in Ireland ample refutation of the American stereotype of the Irish as reckless, ignorant and degraded. He discovered much refinement, breadth, intellectual acumen and independence, the raw materials for a splendid culture.[2] The parallel with the American Negro may not have been lost to all of the readers of Stanton's letters to the New York American.

---

[1] Richard D. Webb to Elizabeth Pease, November 4, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library; and Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], December 3, 1840, p. 166. The quotation was reprinted from the Dublin Register.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, July 24, 1840, p. 2; also reprinted in Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], November 12, 1840, p. 152.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, op. cit., January 5, 1841, p. 2.

Stanton was surprised at the contrast between conditions in northern and southern Ireland. He attributed many of the differences to religion: "That Protestantism is more favorable to intellectual freedom and the diffusion of knowledge than Catholicism, and tends more to elevate mankind and infuse healthful vigor through the social system, philosophy teaches and history proves."[3] Another factor accounting for the superiority of the northern folk Stanton thought to be their Scotch descent. Because of their "sober industry" and "rigid economy," more capital was invested there to the well-being of the population.

Despite his obvious preference for Protestantism, Stanton was shocked by religious bigotry. He regarded the strife and riots fomented in Belfast by the Orange Associations to be a blot on the record of the city.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, January 10, 1841, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., January 15, 1841, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., January 26, 1841, p. 2.

Stanton spoke at Cork, Belfast, Waterford and Limerick before leaving Ireland for Norwich on November 6.[2] The Stantons returned to England for a month before sailing home.[3]

Europe fascinated Stanton; his reverence for the Old World was similar to that of an adult visiting the scenes of a half-remembered childhood for inspiration and enlightenment. He was greatly impressed by the historic sites that he and his wife visited in Europe. As he stated it: "When contemplating their hoar, I have seemed to live among the realities of those remote ages of which I had read and dreamed in my youth, and which to me, had, till now, existed only in the dim records of the historian or the wild fancies of the poet."[4]

Stanton was, nevertheless, quite aware of Old World imperfections. American faults, he believed, were magnified and spread to the world while British faults were unpublicized.[1] A short way up from the church in the historic town of Stratford-on-Avon, Stanton saw a cotton mill. He exclaimed: "Spirit of Trade! What sacrileges cannot filthy lucre bribe thee to commit! Englishmen! You who have shed rivers of ink in blackening American character for graduating every thing by the yard stick of profit, and weighing every thing in the scales of loss and gain--shame on you!"[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, January 26, 1841, p. 2.

[2] Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), I, 100; and Elizabeth Moore to Unknown, November 7, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Elizabeth Pease to John A. Collins, December 6, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, loc. cit.

Class distinctions in England Stanton thought to be an abomination. The English people, he thought, were "taxed to death to support royalty and rank."[3] Poor laws throughout the lands he visited were woefully inadequate and the educational systems were a disgrace. All classes in England, Stanton observed, manifested a surprising lack of knowledge about the United States, while the lower classes revealed an abysmal ignorance of their own history and government. What England needed, Stanton maintained, was a national system of public schools.[4]

The most important result of Stanton's tour was the acquaintance of the British populace with the horrors of American slavery. As

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Glances at Men and Things," New York American, November 6, 1840, p. 2.

[2] Ibid., October 6, 1840, p. 2.

[3] Ibid., October 14, 1840, p. 2.

[4] Ibid., September 30, 1840, p. 2.

Stanton told Gerrit Smith: "Rely upon it, the rebukes of British philanthropists and Christians will be heard in thunder tones across the Atlantic."[1] Although Stanton was overly optimistic, it is entirely possible that his greatest accomplishment as an abolitionist was in sowing the seed that bore fruit in civil war days when British sympathy for the enslaved would inhibit support of the Confederacy. As Stanton prophetically stated it, the contempt for American conduct on the slavery matter "we must feel in due time."[2]

The contention between the feuding factions that had existed in America was not duplicated on the other side of the Atlantic until late in 1840, when John A. Collins, one of the mainstays of Garrison's entourage, arrived in England to solicit support for the old organization. The Massachusetts Abolitionist teased the Garrisonians about the circumstances surrounding Collins' departure from the states. He had gone to Philadelphia rather than to take a ship from Boston, and no notice of his departure appeared in the National Anti-Slavery Standard, organ of the re-organized American Anti-Slavery Society.[3] The implication was that the stealth suggested intrigue.

Shortly after his arrival, Collins was informed by Elizabeth

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1840, Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton (and Elizabeth Cady Stanton) to Gerrit Smith, August 3, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], December 3, 1840, p. 167.

Pease that Stanton and Birney had poisoned the minds of the Scotch against Garrison.[1] Collins, who often exceeded Garrison in his suspicious credulity, investigated and concluded that Stanton and Birney had contaminated the thoughts of the people of Edinburgh by means of a devious plot. Birney, Collins, charged, "lured" George Thompson and Charles Remond to the Scotch countryside so that Stanton and Scoble could go to work on the people of Edinburgh.[2] Apparently there was no antidote to the Stantonian poison.

Collins found the anti-slavery cause in England in terrible shape. He was convinced that the abolitionists in that country were not good ones. George Thompson was the only one who gave any encouragement, but even he, Collins thought, was weak: a mere creature of circumstances.[3]

Collins met Stanton and they had a long conversation about the division in the anti-slavery ranks. From the discussion Collins concluded that in Stanton's mind the sole cause of the rupture was Garrison. Collins had nothing but pity for Stanton, a "poor man" who had nothing to say though he spoke much.[4] Mrs. Stanton, who was more inclined toward multi-reform than her husband, had many conversations with Collins and thought him a "'dear' man."[1] She might have had a different opinion had she been aware of Collins' activities after the departure of the Stantons.

---

[1] Elizabeth Pease to John A. Collins, November 19, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

[2] John A. Collins to Maria W. Chapman, December 3, 1840, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Ibid.; and John A. Collins to Elizabeth Pease, December 4, 1840, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

Collins accused the Executive Committee of the pre-Garrisonian old organization of a breach of honesty. Particularly did he brand Stanton and Birney with duplicity, saying that if the pair had acted as individuals they would long before have been placed in prison in the United States! Their crimes in England would have merited hanging! Collins claimed that Stanton had skulked off to America to avoid the odium attached to his misconduct.[2]

Collins' charges were later published in book form.[3] In the book Birney, Elizur Wright and Stanton were accused of transferring The Emancipator, when they could have kept it going out of their own salaries, of receiving money from an illegal sale of books, of going to Europe on old organization money, but registering themselves as members of the new, and of going around Europe attacking the organization that was paying their salaries.[1] While it is true that Stanton and Birney should have returned all money beyond salaries which they had received from the old organization when they chose to identify with the new organization, Collins' other statements are not fair. The book sale was required to pay salaries due and there was no reason why Stanton, Birney and Wright should have used their own money to keep The Emancipator going.

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, January 25, 1841, Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

[2] Joseph Marriage, Jr. to Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, December 30, 1840, in The Emancipator [New York], February 25, 1841, p. 174; John Scoble to James Birney, January 2, 1841, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 621; G. W. Alexander to James Haughton, March 11, 1840 [undoubtedly should be 1841], in Annie H. Abel and Frank J. Klingberg, A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858, Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (Lancaster, Pa.: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1927), pp. 67-69.

[3] John A. Collins, Right and Wrong Among the Abolitionists of the United States of the Objects, Principles, and Measures of the Original American Anti-Slavery Society Unchanged (Glasgow: George Gallie, 1841).

Collins did not succeed well in tarnishing Stanton's reputation. A committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society voted unanimously on December 7, to record their high estimate of Stanton's valuable services in the cause of universal suffrage. A scroll, signed by Thomas Clarkson, on behalf of the committee was sent to Stanton.[2] Joseph Sturge, the Quaker abolitionist and Birmingham manufacturer, later penned the requiem for Collins' efforts to muster support for the Garrisonian wing of the movement. The philanthropist wrote: "The British abolitionists found from experience that they could only preserve unity amongst various sets of parties in their ranks by keeping to the simple and undivided abolition of Slavery and they are anxious that their American friends should guard against any extraneous matter under the Anti-Slavery banners."[1]

---

[1] John A. Collins, Right and Wrong Among the Abolitionists of the United States of the Objects, Principles, and Measures of the Original American Anti-Slavery Society Unchanged (Glasgow, George Gallie, 1841), pp. 38-40.

[2] "Resolution of Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society," Department of Rare Books, Cornell University Library.

The year 1840 had been a turning point for Henry B. Stanton and the anti-slavery cause. The old organization, the American Anti-Slavery Society, which had been established to promote moral and political action had been seized by the anti-political abolitionists. Stanton had been forced to seek both a new platform from which to continue the assault on slavery, and, as a married man, a new livelihood.

The interlude in Europe had re-inforced his convictions. His cause was righteous; political means were both appropriate and necessary; and neither colonization nor Garrisonism had much appeal for the average man. How anti-slavery agitation should be organized and supported and exactly what form it should take were questions that he would have to answer after his return from Europe.

---

[1] Joseph Sturge, message of April 27, 1841, in "An Anti-Slavery Album of Contributions from Friends of Freedom," Western Anti-Slavery Society Papers, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER VIII

LIBERTY PARTY LEADER

After seventeen uncomfortably cold and dreary nights and days aboard the *Acadia*, during which Henry was frequently confined to his berth, the Stantons arrived in Boston harbor on the bright sunny afternoon of December 21, 1840. They were in good spirits, but without any definite plans for the future.[1] The couple traveled immediately to New York where they arrived on Christmas eve, spent a week with the Eatons, and traveled by sleigh and train to the Cady home in Johnstown, New York.[2]

Henry and Elizabeth planned to spend the winter visiting friends. They journeyed to Peterboro, New York to spend some time with Gerrit Smith. When Birney arrived from the West, he and Stanton began where they had left off, holding an anti-slavery meeting in the local Presbyterian church.[3]

---

[1] C. W. Denison, December 23, 1840, to *Massachusetts Abolitionist* [Boston], December 31, 1840, p. 182; and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Neall, January 25 [1841], Sydney Howard Gay Collection, Columbia University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, January 8, 1841, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), I, 107; and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898), pp. 107-110.

[3] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, February 8, 1841, from *American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Reporter* in Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 623-624.

After a few weeks at Gerrit Smith's home, the couple returned to Johnstown where Henry began reading the law in his father-in-law's office. In May of 1842, he qualified as a practicing attorney. "I told you so," said the Garrisonians, who regarded the law as hostile to the gospel of Christ.[1] "H. B. Stanton, on dit--has left the cause--and is studying law and elevating himself to politicks," commented Caroline Weston.[2] Anne Weston, who shared the belief that law and abolition were incompatible, welcomed the news since she thought it might mean that the "slanders" against Garrison and the old organization might be suspended.[3]

Stanton had not left the cause, however, although he found that for the time being he could not participate as fully as he would have liked. Lewis Tappan had hoped to secure the services of both Stanton and Birney as lecturers for the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, with Birney to address the churches and Stanton the legislative bodies.[4] Unfortunately, a circular soliciting pledges to provide for their salaries failed to realize a sufficient amount of money. Stanton and Birney, both with families to support, had to turn down their commissions and resign as corresponding secretaries of the national organization.[1] The society grieved over these losses. "When the history of American abolition, its trials, and its final triumphs shall be written," observed its annual report, "due honor will be awarded to the late national anti-slavery secretaries, Birney, Wright and Stanton."[2]

---

[1] Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (The New American Nation Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 156.

[2] Caroline Weston to Unknown, n.d., Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Anne Weston to Maria W. Chapman, April 15, 1841, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Lewis Tappan to Amos Phelps, December 22, 1840, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

Stanton did attend the first anniversary meeting of the new organization in New York City in May of 1841 where he met Birney, Leavitt, Alvan Stewart and other friends. Unable to resist the call, he accepted a place on the large Executive Committee of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.[3] In Johnstown, despite the demands of his law studies, Stanton participated in local anti-slavery activities. It was not long before he became deeply involved in the new politics of abolitionism.

Origins of the Liberty Party

The balance of power theory of political action had proven ineffective. As Gerrit Smith had observed in 1838, most abolitionists, in failing to alter their traditional voting habits had "shown their willingness to sacrifice the holy cause of crushed humanity on the polluted altar of party politics."[1] Smith had advocated the formation of a new anti-slavery organization requiring that members pledge not to vote for any candidate who did not declare himself in favor of immediate emancipation in his state (if applicable), in the District of Columbia, and throughout the world.[2] Other abolitionists had been going even further, advocating the formation of a distinct anti-slavery party which could command the loyalty of abolitionist voters. Still others had opposed all political action. By 1839 the unanimity that had once characterized the abolition movement had vanished.

---

[1] "Abstract of the First Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society," The Emancipator [New York], May 20, 1841, p. 9; The Emancipator [New York], March 11, 1841, p. 282; and Free American [Boston], April 23 [should be April 22], 1841, p. 31.

[2] "Abstract of the First Annual Report of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society," The Emancipator [New York], May 20, 1841, p. 9.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], May 20, 1841, p. 11.

The American Anti-Slavery Society at its annual meeting of 1839 had provided for the calling of a national convention in Albany in July of 1839 to develop a program that would mobilize the political power of anti-slavery men to break the power of slavery.[3] Stanton had been hopeful that this convention would attract the attendance of political anti-slavery people like Theodore Sedgwick and Thomas Morris, who accepted the principles of abolitionists while not approving of their measures.[1] Stanton had been convinced that if political anti-slavery was going to be successful, the ranks of abolitionist voters would have to be expanded. Name politicians could attract voters. Both Sedgwick and Morris had sent their regrets for not being able to attend the convention but had expressed their approval of abolitionist principles.[2]

---

[1] Gerrit Smith to The Liberator [Boston], December 21, 1848, p. 201.

[2] Gerrit Smith to Amos Phelps, December 28, 1838, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[3] Henry B. Stanton and Joshua Leavitt, for Committee of Arrangements, to Luther Bradish, June 20, 1839, Luther Bradish Papers, New York Historical Society.

At the Albany Convention, Stanton had voted for a resolution declaring it to be the duty of abolitionists to vote, but the majority of the delegates had only been willing to earnestly entreat their comrades to exercise their franchise. He had voted against a resolution advocating the nomination of anti-slavery candidates, believing that no action should be taken until the major parties had selected their candidates.[3] Stanton's conversations with abolitionists had convinced him that should Clay be the nominee of the Whigs, most of the abolitionists would refuse to support that party and would willingly accept an abolitionist candidate.[4] The delegates at Albany had shared Stanton's opinion but had left the selection of distinct anti-slavery candidates up to local abolitionists.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, June 10, 1839, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 489-491.

[2] Thomas Morris to N. Sanford, July 22, 1839 and Theodore Sedgwick to Joshua Leavitt and Henry B. Stanton, July 23, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], August 22, 1839, p. 1.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], August 8, 1839, pp. 58-59.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, June 29, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], July 11, 1839, p. 4.

In early September a meeting of anti-slavery electors in Rochester had decided to make independent nomination for the state assembly and had appointed Myron Holley to call a county convention.[2] The fourteen persons who had attended this convention, also held in Rochester, had called for the formation of a new political party and had appointed a committee headed by Holley to call a convention for Cleveland in October to nominate candidates for President and Vice President.[3]

Stanton had journeyed to Cleveland to attend the important convention. Before the delegates had assembled Stanton had received a letter from Elizur Wright strongly pressing the expediency of independent nominations, regarding this action as necessary to save the cause.[4] Despite Wright's urging, Stanton had opposed the nomination of independent candidates. Such a nomination, he then believed, would surprise many abolitionists. Stanton had thought it advisable to await the actions of the major parties before deciding upon a course that might prove to be futile and embarrassing. If the Whigs nominated Winfield Scott an independent nomination would be inexpedient, Stanton had told Wright. If Clay were nominated, then by all means a convention should be called to consider the nomination of abolitionist candidates.[1]

---

[1] The Emancipator [New York], August 8, 1839, pp. 58-59.

[2] The Emancipator [New York], September 19, 1839, p. 83.

[3] The Emancipator [New York], October 24, 1839, p. 101; and The Liberator [Boston], October 25, 1839, p. 170.

[4] Elizur Wright to Henry B. Stanton, October 12, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress. This was the so-called "Streak Letter" which fell into the hands of Garrison and was published repeatedly in The Liberator to illustrate the insincerity of the political abolitionists who had repeatedly insisted that their desire was not to form a third party.

At the convention attended by four hundred delegates, three hundred sixty from the state of Ohio,[2] Myron Holley had brought forth a resolution calling for the formation of a new party and the selection of a committee to make nominations for the two highest elective offices in the land. Holley's motion had been thoroughly discussed but was laid on the table.[3]

Stanton had thought that the general sentiment of the delegates at Cleveland favored the selection of abolitionist candidates in case neither of the major parties nominated men for whom abolitionists could consistently vote. He had told Whittier: "But in my view, it will be time enough to meet the crisis when it comes. Till then, let us tread the old beaten track." If Clay and Van Buren were to receive the major party nominations, then the path of the political abolitionists was clear.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, October 28, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] From *Ohio Philanthropist* [Cincinnati], n.d., in *The Liberator* [Boston], December 6, 1839, p. 193.

[3] "Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society at Cleveland," American Anti-Slavery Society Papers, Library of Congress; *The Emancipator* [New York], October 31, 1839, p. 106; and Elizur Wright, *Myron Holley* (Boston: The Author, 1882), p. 254.

The third party advocates had been impatient, however, and at the convention held at Warsaw, New York, in November, had nominated Birney for President and Julius Le Moyne, a wealthy Pennsylvania physician and President of the Western Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, for Vice President.[2] LeMoyne, however, alarmed by the disagreements among the abolitionists and convinced that the abolitionists had insufficient numbers for a political party, had declined the nomination.[3] Birney, for similar reasons, had followed suit.[4] The withdrawals had not restored harmony in the ranks. Lewis Tappan, strongly opposed to a third party, had looked askance at Joshua Leavitt's use of The Emancipator, the organ of the national society, to promote his opposite views. Stanton had tried without much success to keep the topic out of the discussions of the Executive Committee.[1] Tappan had kept advancing resolutions against Leavitt's activities. In December the Executive Committee had directed Leavitt to instruct his readers that the views on independent nominations that appeared in the paper were his and not those of the committee.[2] Finally, in February of 1840, Leavitt had been ordered to cease urging the cause of political action in The Emancipator.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, October 26, 1839, The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], November 7, 1839, p. 2.

[2] The Emancipator [New York], November 28, 1839, p. 123.

[3] Julius LeMoyne to Myron Holley, Joshua Darling and Josiah Andrews, December 10, 1839, The Liberator [Boston], January 10, 1840, p. 6.

[4] James Birney to Myron Holley, Joshua Darling and Josiah Andrews, December 17, 1839, The Liberator [Boston], January 10, 1840, p. 6. Birney, a very sensitive individual, had also been piqued at the failure of some who favored political nominations to regard him as the best candidate. James Birney to Myron Holley, December 26, 1839, James Birney Papers, Library of Congress. Stanton had told Birney that Gerrit Smith thought that the nomination should go to a known politician like Thomas Morris. It is likely that Stanton would have favored Morris if there had to be a candidate. Leavitt and Elizur Wright favored Gerrit Smith as candidate, Joshua Leavitt to Elizur Wright, December 5, 1839, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

To add to the turmoil, Charles Torrey in Massachusetts had taken it upon himself to get out a circular calling for a convention to be held in New York in the spring to nominate a candidate for President. Stanton, Birney, Jay and Lewis Tappan among others had opposed the project. Stanton had urged Torrey to desist, explaining the opinion of the abolitionist leaders to whom he had spoken, expressing his own belief that a candidate should not be nominated, and suggesting that before any precipitious action be undertaken that important men in the movement should be consulted.[4] The hypersensitive Torrey thought that Stanton was implying that Torrey was not a leader and more tensions had thereby been created.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 25 [1839], Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," November 7, 1839, p. 205; ibid., December 19, 1839, p. 217.

[3] "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society," February 20, 1840, p. 233; and Joshua Leavitt to Gerrit Smith, March 10, 1840, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] James Birney to Amos Phelps, February 4, 1840; Henry B. Stanton to Amos Phelps, February 4, 1840, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

Myron Holley and his irrepressible cohorts had called another convention to meet at Arcade in western New York to consider the issue of a third party. The delegates had agreed there that such a party should be formed and called another convention for Albany to choose the candidates.[2]

In the meantime, Henry C. Wright, a non-resistant and close friend of Garrison, had traveled to western New York. He had concluded that the call for the Albany Convention was the work of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He had claimed that Stanton and Birney were the archmovers in the "political heresy" that would form an independent anti-slavery party.[3] This was untrue. The Executive Committee had been divided over the propriety of independent political action, while Stanton had been fully convinced that the time for nomination of abolitionist candidates had not yet arrived. The Whigs, who had passed over Henry Clay to nominate William Henry Harrison on a Union and Harmony ticket scented victory and Stanton had thought that they "would wade to their armpits in molten lava to drive Van Buren from power." Since the vast majority of abolitionists were of the Whig persuasion, a third party ticket was doomed to a miserable showing. Even staunch anti-slavery men like Joshua Giddings, Benjamin Wade, Leicester King, Samuel Lewis and Salmon P. Chase, all of Ohio, had been backing the Harrison-Tyler ticket. Stanton had believed that the Whig abolitionists were sincere in their claim that the effort to displace Van Buren was their last two-party effort. Stanton had assured Birney that they would repent and in the following year, the abolitionists could "nail our flag to the mast" with their support.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Torrey, February 22, 1840, typed copy of original in Alma Lutz Collection.

[2] Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 297.

[3] Henry C. Wright to George W. Benson, February 20, 1840, Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 339-341.

Stanton had wavered between anticipation that a strong anti-slavery party would be supported by recalcitrant Whigs and the expectation that the Whig Party might assume a position that would justify abolitionist support. The significant element in each alternative had been the conviction that the abolitionists could accomplish little by themselves; some form of alliance with one of the major parties or a large fraction thereof was necessary. This theme was submerged to reappear later in the decade.

Stanton had been elated over the efforts of some New York Whigs to defend the right of petition and oppose the gag rule and delighted that the Whig boss, Thurlow Weed, had supported their position.[1] He had also been pleased with Governor Seward's refusal to extradite three sailors, New York citizens, who had assisted runaway slaves and been demanded by the civil authorities of Virginia. Stanton had explained to the Whig governor that he was convinced that one of the major parties would be brought to the right position, if it could see that "the time was approaching when every Northern State would be compelled to go to the utmost verge of its constitutional rights to resist successfully the assaults of the slave power of this country upon our liberties."[2] Stanton had assured Weed that Seward's action would give him a strong hold on the abolitionists of New York.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, March 21, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 541-543.

Stanton's propensity for telling his correspondents what they would most like to hear makes a determination of his true expectations difficult. It is likely, however, that he believed that an anti-slavery party with its ranks augmented by former Whigs, if such became a reality, would act as a lever to force one of the major parties to an enlightened position. If this could be done without a third party, so much the better.

Stanton had thought that the calling of the Albany Convention was a serious mistake. If nominations were not forthcoming, the Garrisonians would claim victory for having thwarted them, Stanton had thought. If candidates were selected the Garrisonian forces would win sympathy and influence among those abolitionists who were unwilling to abandon their allegiance to the Whigs.[1] Stanton had not attended the Albany Convention which assembled on April 1, 1840--Garrison called it the April Fools Convention. Only one hundred twenty-one delegates had been present, including one hundred four from New York State and forty-eight from the city of Albany.[2] By a vote of forty-four to thirty-three the convention had decided to select national candidates. Birney had been nominated by a large majority for President. Gerrit Smith had received the support of several delegates. The Vice Presidential nomination had gone to Thomas Earle, a forty-three year old merchant and abolitionist from Pennsylvania.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Thurlow Weed, February 7, 1840, Thurlow Weed Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to William H. Seward, February 7, 1840, William H. Seward Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thurlow Weed, February 7, 1840, Thurlow Weed Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

Stanton had been dismayed at the events which had transpired at Albany and regarded the nominations as injurious to the cause. He had told Thurlow Weed that the nominations tended to keep in power men that he detested but predicted that they would not have that effect since the great body of abolitionists would continue to vote for their parties.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, March 21, 1840, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), I, 541-543.

[2] Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], April 9, 1840, p. 31; and The Liberator [Boston], April 10, 1840, p. 59.

[3] James Birney, Diary, April 4, 1840, James Birney Papers, Library of Congress.

The election had proved to be a disaster for the Liberty men as Stanton had predicted it would be. Birney had received a little less than seven thousand votes, about one-tenth of the total strength of the abolitionist movement. Only in Massachusetts had the third party received as much as one per cent of the votes cast. The Whig abolitionists had not deserted their party in any appreciable manner. The forty-nine shots fired from a cannon set upon Goddard Hill by the abolitionists of Brookline, Massachusetts, when the Whig victory was announced were just so many symbolic shots into the tender hides of the political abolitionists.[2] The description by the abolitionist editor, Austin Willey, of the condition of the movement in Maine had been generally applicable: "The political tornado has left us prostrate." But Willey had not been without hope. "This storm has been a terrible one to our cause," he had continued, "but if we can survive it, nothing else can overthrow us. . . . I hope when Birney and Stanton return our invaluable cause will receive a new impulse."[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Thurlow Weed, April 8, 1840, Thurlow Weed Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[2] Harold P. Williams, "Brookline in the Anti-Slavery Movement," Brookline Historical Society Publications, XVIII (October, 1899), 77.

[3] Austin Willey to Amos Phelps, November 10, 1840, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

Liberty Party Campaigner

When Henry Stanton returned from Europe the third party was a reality; he had either to accept it or reject it. If he decided to renounce the party, he could join the Garrisonians in denouncing politics, which was unthinkable, attempt to use depleted ranks in resurrecting the balance of power strategy, which was impractical, or withdraw from organized abolitionism, which was defeatism. To Stanton there was no choice; the Liberty Party it had to be.

Stanton threw himself into the cause of the party almost as if he had been its sponsor from the outset. Every moment that he did not have to spend in studying the law he devoted to planning conventions or making speeches in Fulton County. Except for occasional assistance from agents of the American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, he carried the burden of the 1841 campaign in his county by himself.[1] By mid-summer he was making from two to five speeches a week, taking advantage of the pro-temperance climate in Fulton to condemn the "twin monsters," slavery and alcohol.[2] The temperance question helped to gain support for abolition by endowing the agitators with respectability and illustrating that degredation was the common factor of all slavery, whether associated with the bottle or the lash.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 9, 1841, December 4, 1841, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; and Free American [Boston], October 2, 1841, p. 129.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, August 3, 1841, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Henry B. Stanton to Elizur Wright, August 25, 1841, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress, also printed in Free American [Boston], September 2, 1841, p. 107.

The Garrisonian abolitionists, Stanton thought, were making a frantic effort to break down the Liberty Party.[2] He also had to endure considerable abuse during the campaign from the Whigs of his county--an indication of the effect his speeches were having. His joy was great when the election returns indicated that the Whigs had been defeated soundly. More reassuring was the quadrupling of the Liberty vote from the previous year.[3]

Stanton's labors for the party earned him a position on the State Central Committee in 1842.[4] He did not, however, confine his labors to New York. After the nominating convention in the Empire State, he journeyed to Massachusetts to participate in that state's convention. To two thousand people in Faneuil Hall he delivered a speech which, according to the local abolitionist newspaper "has been pronounced by competent judges one of the most powerful and eloquent addresses ever delivered in the Hall."[5] Elizur Wright, who had heard many fine speeches in his time recalled Stanton's address as having been "noble and thrilling."[1] Stanton charged the North with supplying the power by which slavery was upheld and he chided politicians who sacrificed principles for office and party honors. The Liberty Party, in contrast, was composed of men dedicated to the principles of the Declaration of Independence. Deafening applause followed Stanton's oration.[2]

---

[1] Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (The New American Nation Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 40.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 4, 1841, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, Thursday morning, n.d. [November, 1841], Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], February 10, 1842, p. 196.

[5] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], March 3, 1842, p. 206.

The New Englanders had, throughout the 1830's, been Stanton's most appreciative audiences. His influence in Massachusetts was immense.[3] It was appropriate that, with his many friends and admirers in the Bay State, Stanton should choose to establish his law practice there. In June he traveled to Boston to prepare himself for his examination.[4] When he was confident that he was ready, he hurried back to Johnstown to visit his wife and their first child, Daniel Cady Stanton, who had been born on March 2nd. Henry returned to Boston and easily passed his examination by Chief Justice Williams.[5]

Stanton returned to Massachusetts in time to participate in the fall election of 1842. He noted that Garrisonian influence was declining in the state and that many new converts were being made to political abolition.[1] Stanton took to the stump condemning slavery and censuring the two major parties. The Democrats were castigated for even contemplating the nomination of John C. Calhoun, while the local Whigs were reproached for their association with Henry Clay.[2] Stanton charged that both parties were under the control of the Slave Power; the only hope of rescuing the nation from "this base thraldom" was the Liberty Party.[3] The election returns were gratifying. The party doubled its vote from the previous year and sent several of its men to the state legislature.[4]

---

[1] Elizur Wright to John Alden, May 4, 1842, The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], May 12, 1842, p. 7.

[2] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], March 3, 1842, p. 206.

[3] Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 285.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Thursday Afternoon, n.d. [June 23, 1842], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[5] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Tuesday, 5 p.m., n.d., Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton was then able to relax just a bit. He had been so occupied with the study of law and his temperance and anti-slavery activities that his family life had suffered. He apologized to Elizabeth for the coldness and unkindness that he had shown to her and affirmed his love.[5] Remaining in Boston, Stanton sought living accommodations for his family and opened a law office in the same building with his friend and adviser, Samuel Sewall, who had been one of the founders of the New England Anti-Slavery Society.[1] He returned to Johnstown and in October moved his family to Chelsea, Massachusetts, where they boarded with Reverend John Wesley Olmstead, a Baptist minister.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to James Birney, August 2, 1842, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 707-709.

[2] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], October 27, 1842, p. 102 and November 10, 1842, p. 109; and The Emancipator and Republican [Boston], November 3, 1842, p. 107.

[3] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], November 10, 1842, p. 111.

[4] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], January 26, 1843, p. 150.

[5] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Tuesday, 5 p.m., n.d., Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton also participated in another abolitionist victory in 1842. Quick action by the anti-slavery men prevented the enslavement of the alleged fugitive, George Latimer. The man who claimed Latimer as his property signed a deed of emancipation in exchange for four hundred dollars rather than to run the risk of losing both Latimer and his court costs.[3] One of the tenets of the abolitionist faith--that slaveowners should not be paid when Negroes under their control gained their freedom--was violated, but the case helped to mobilize public sentiment against slavery.

Stanton's work for the Liberty party in Massachusetts earned him the chairmanship of the State Central Committee in 1843. He began at once to improve the structure of the organization.[1] One party worker in each town in the commonwealth was selected to secure grass roots support.[2] Stanton sent letters to party members throughout the state asking them to volunteer their services in organizing meetings to be held in their localities.[3] Elizur Wright, Elihu Burritt and others wrote tracts which Stanton's committee distributed.[4] In addition to supervising the work of local groups and the central committee, Stanton acted as liaison between the party and the anti-slavery press[5] and delivered addresses at conventions throughout the state.[6]

---

[1] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], September 29, 1842, p. 82.

[2] Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), I, 131.

[3] Louis Filler, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (The New American Nation Series, eds. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. New York: Harper and Row, 1960), p. 171. Stanton's participation is indicated in a notice, dated November 15, 1842, in The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], December 18, 1842, p. 127.

The growth of the party locally was important to Stanton and his comrades, but they knew that the slavery question was a national one so that a great part of their interest was focused on the selection of the Presidential candidate for 1844. The regular nominating convention was to be held in Buffalo in August of 1843. Stanton thought that Judge William Jay, the son of the eminent Federalist statesman, who had recently joined the Liberal Party, would make a strong candidate. His name, influence and associations, Stanton reckoned, would win him a great many votes, particularly in New England, without losing any votes that Birney might pull. Nevertheless, Stanton did not want to forsake Birney and thought that his friend should be given the nomination unless he should choose to decline.[1] Birney did give Charles H. Stewart permission to withdraw his name, if, after consultation with Stanton, Leavitt, Goodell, Smith and Alvan Stewart, it was decided that Jay would secure the approval of all abolitionists.[2] Yet, Birney wanted the nomination and when the time came he was not denied. The convention chose as his running mate, Thomas Morris, the former United States Senator from Ohio who had been ousted from the Democratic Party for his anti-slavery position. Morris' opposition to Negro suffrage was ignored by the abolitionists in their eagerness to run a known politician. This was the first indication that political expediency would be the criterion for selecting candidates rather than equalitarian principles.

---

[1] The Emancipator and Free American [Boston], January 26, 1843, p. 150.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Chairman, and Amos B. Merrill, Secretary, State Central Committee to Elizur Wright, July 4, 1843, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, for State Liberty Committee, form letter, September 23, 1843, Amos Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Elizur Wright to Beriah Green, October 10, 1843, typed copy, Elizur Wright Papers, Boston Public Library.

[5] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, February 3, 1844 in John Albree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), pp. 86-87.

[6] Elizur Wright to Beriah Green, October 10, 1843, typed copy, Elizur Wright Papers, Boston Public Library; and John Pierpont to Elizur Wright, October 10, 1843, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton, Salmon P. Chase and Alvan Stewart were in the main responsible for writing the platform which was accepted by the delegates. The platform was a long one and a strong one. Although it did not specifically mention Negro suffrage, it called upon Liberty men in the free states to remove all existing inequality of rights or privileges based on color. It called for the complete divorce of the national government from slavery, the abrogation of the three-fifths clause and declared that as far as abolitionists were concerned the provision for the return of fugitive slaves was null and void.[1] Stanton was pleased with everything at the convention except the platform plank which dealt with the return of fugitives. His position was that the Constitutional clause at issue did not pertain to slaves.[2] It was permissable to interpret a clause so as to deny its disagreeable meaning. To declare a provision of the Constitution, Article IV, Section 2, null and void was dangerous, particularly since the abolitionists had insisted so strongly on preserving inviolate the constitutional guarantees of free speech, press and petition.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, August 4, 1843, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] James Birney to Charles H. Stewart, August 17, 1843, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938), II, 753-758. A copy was sent to Joshua Leavitt also.

In December, Stanton started laying plans for the February, 1844, state convention in Massachusetts. He believed that if the state legislature were to choose the electors who would cast their ballots for the Presidency, a strong showing at the state convention might cause Whig legislators to choose anti-Clay men, thus depriving the Great Compromiser of the state's votes.[1] The Call which Stanton issued for this meeting reflected the strong emphasis that the Liberty Party's national platform had put on the evils of the Slave Power. Stanton extended the argument by blaming the Slave Power for all of the national ills. It was accused of deranging the currency, distracting trade and commerce, and bringing the northern economy to the brink of ruin for the purpose of bringing "bankruptcy into all avenues of honest industry." The Slave Power was indicted for endangering republican institutions, fomenting local prejudice, plotting to enlarge its boundaries even though the result might be war, and scoffing at the truths of the Declaration of Independence. Stanton's message was almost completely devoted to the damage done to the North and to the nation by the Slave Power rather than the damage it had done to the Negro. The shift of the emphasis was a bow to political expediency. The anthropomorphizing of slavery provided a target for attack and it allowed the Liberty politicians to appeal to the voters on the level of personal interests and fears. As Stanton phrased the strategy: "The object of the Liberty party is to mobilize public opinion and its influence through the ballot box for the overthrow of the Slave Power. Public attention is being aroused to the aggressions of the Slave Power upon the general liberties and prosperity of the Republic."[1]

---

[1] Betty Fladeland, James Gillespie Birney, Slaveholder to Abolitionist (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955), p. 225; and Kirk H. Porter and Donald B. Johnson (comp.), National Party Platforms, 1840-1956 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 4-8.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, February 6, 1844, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 20, 1843, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Stanton and the other political activists in Massachusetts and elsewhere were, it is clear, changing the nature of the abolitionist crusade. While they believed that by breaking down the political power of the South, they would ultimately destroy slavery, the phrasing of their appeals was such that they gained adherents who were more concerned with the exaggerated charges against the Slave Power, less concerned with the evil of slavery _per se_, and unconcerned with the plight of the Negro. The abolitionist movement had begun with the Negro at the center; the question was: Would the forces that they were mobilizing to political action ever get back to the Negro?

The Liberty Party leaders, without exception, supported Birney simply because he was the standard bearer of their organization. The rank and file abolitionist, however, considered both the platforms and candidates of the major parties, preferring, in most cases, to support the Whigs if this could be done in good conscience. It was up to Stanton and his fellow propagandists to persuade these voters that support of either major party was treason to the cause. In this endeavor they were ably abetted by the Texas issue and by Henry Clay himself.

While the Liberty ship went ahead under full steam, the major parties ran aground on the Texas annexation issue. President Tyler had negotiated, through Secretary of State John C. Calhoun, a treaty providing that Texas should become a territory of the United States. The treaty was submitted to the United States Senate on April 22, 1844. On April 27, 1844 both Henry Clay and Martin Van Buren, the likely candidates for President, wrote letters expressing the view that the annexation of Texas was at that time inexpedient. Stanton engaged in premature self-congratulation when he told Chase on May 1, that the Liberty Party had succeeded in bringing Clay and Van Buren to their moderate positions on the issue. Moral suasion could never have achieved this, Stanton crowed.[1] The treaty was defeated by the United States Senate in June, but the issue was not closed.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Call for the Liberty State Convention," January 10, 1844, _The Emancipator and Republican_ [Boston], January 11, 1844, p. 146.

The Democratic Party proceeded to deny the nomination to Van Buren and to give it to the expansionist, James Polk. When Clay too saw his southern support drifting away, he was forced to yield. In his Alabama letters he said that he would like to see Texas annexed, if this could be done without dishonor or war.[2]

Stanton thought that annexation of Texas would be a dishonorable act which would put the nation in great danger. He feared that Texas might be divided into six slave states thus giving the slaveholders power to alter the Constitution and deprive the people of fundamental liberties. As early as 1838, he had predicted that if our country were to admit "this valley of rascals, this Jazar house of moral pollution," to the Union that the country would be involved in a war with Mexico. Subsequently Mexico City, Cuba and St. Domingo would become targets for further aggression by the slaveholders. The British West Indies would also be in danger, Stanton had explained, because from the point of view of the slaveholders it was dangerous to have the West Indies experiment demonstrate to the world that the black man was fit for freedom. Stanton had told a Faneuil Hall audience what the consequences of annexation would be: "O sir, I dread the dissolution of such a Union [as ours]. God grant that my eyes may never see the desolation that will follow. But as I stand here with these burning facts before me, the conviction stares me in the face, that dissolution must inevitably follow the annexation of Texas."[1] As Stanton had seen in 1838, the dissolution would result from the unwillingness of the North to submit to the South's trampling on cherished freedoms.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, May 1, 1844, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848 (The New American Nation Series. Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1963), pp. 182-188.

One of the main purposes of the petition campaign in the late 1830's had been the prevention of the annexation. Stanton, Whittier, and Wright were the trio that had worked most diligently against Texas among the abolitionists. Whittier later credited their efforts, and the five thousand dollars which they spent in the process, for keeping Texas out of the Union at that time.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of January 25, 1838, The Liberator [Boston], February 2, 1838, p. 18.

[2] Ibid.; see also Henry B. Stanton's article on petitions, The Emancipator [New York], September 19, 1839, p. 82.

The turn that the Texas question took in 1844 complicated matters for Stanton and his Liberty cohorts. Birney's candidacy would cost Clay votes and might result in the election of Polk and the annexation of Texas. Nevertheless Stanton believed that the abolitionists could not adhere to their program and still support Clay. The abolitionists wanted the abolition of slavery in the national capital, they wanted the discontinuation of the interstate slave trade, they wanted the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793; they could not support a slave-owner. Moreover, Clay's Alabama letters were totally unacceptable so that even if Texas were the only issue, the Whig candidate would not do.[2]

Stanton handled the campaign in Massachusetts with great skill.[3]

---

[1] John G. Whittier to Elizur Wright, October 14, 1845, Samuel T. Pickard (ed.), Whittier as a Politician, Illustrated by His Letters to Professor Elizur Wright (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1900), p. 36.

[2] "The Liberty Party Annexed Texas," The Emancipator [Boston], September 29, 1847, p. 2. Since editorials in this paper were not signed, it is not possible to state with any certainty the author of any of them. The editorial referred to here was the lead editorial appearing when Stanton was the sole editor of the paper; it is consistent with his style and seems to be an expression of his point of view. Other editorials, printed while Stanton was editor and written in his style and adjudged by this author to be very probably his work will be hereafter cited as "Believed to be by Stanton."

[3] Stanton at the same time practiced law to support his growing family. So busy was he that he did not see his second child, named after its father, until a month after its birth in Albany. Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 30 [1844], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

He arranged Liberty conventions, secured speakers, wrote for the press and made speeches almost every night for two months prior to the convention. To top it off, he ran for Congress as the Liberty candidate from District 2, in Essex County, receiving fifteen hundred votes, considerably more than the average vote for such a candidacy.[1]

Stanton found during the campaign that the Liberty candidates had more to contend with than the Democrats and the Whigs. The Garrisonians, both voting and non-voting, he thought, had made an "open and shameless" alliance with the Clay Whigs.[2] Garrison, "an artful Jacobin, a genuine Robespierre," Stanton told his good friend, Salmon P. Chase, one of the Liberty leaders of Ohio, spared no pains to misrepresent the character and purposes of the Liberty Party.[3]

The abolitionists also had to contend with the anti-Catholic, anti-foreign, native American movement. Stanton regarded it to be a prime function of the State Committee to warn Liberty men of the dangers of nativism, a movement inimical to the equalitarian and libertarian values of the abolitionists. Referring to the program of the new movement, Stanton said, "It is no doubt one of the best adapted questions to distract us that bigotry and slavery could devise."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, February 3, July 20, 1844, in John Allbree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), pp. 86-87, 91-93; Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 6, 1844, November 12, 1844, November 23, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; and Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, February 6, 1844, May 1, 1844, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 12, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, February 6, 1844, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Another problem was presented to the Liberty men shortly before the election when the Whigs released a letter that suggested a corrupt liaison between Birney and the Democrats. Birney denied having written the letter, but the issue was brought out so close to election time that the candidate's response did not reach a good segment of the voting public in time.[2] Stanton and seven other abolitionists joined in sending a letter to the local anti-slavery press in Boston supporting Birney's integrity and impugning the Whigs for spreading malicious falsehoods. The origin of the charges against Birney was his acceptance of his home county's Democratic nomination for the Michigan legislature. Stanton and his co-authors avowed that Birney answered the call of the people rather than that of the party in accepting the nomination. He felt that he could not shirk his duty to end the mishandling of county business which had caused such dissatisfaction among the people.[3] Actually, however, Stanton agreed with Whittier's assessment of Birney's action, "It was worse than a crime--it was a blunder." Birney, Stanton concluded, could not have fully appreciated his party's and his own position before the nation or he would have refused to have anything to do with the major parties. But, Stanton thought, "the wisest will occasionally misjudge."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 23, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961), p. 303.

[3] Henry B. Stanton et al. to "The Liberty-Loving Voters of Massachusetts," November 5, 1844 in The Emancipator and Weekly Chronicle [Boston], November 6, 1844, p. 111.

Despite all of the difficulties, Birney polled sixty-two thousand three hundred votes, almost a nine hundred per cent increase over his 1840 showing. Over one-half of his votes were from Massachusetts, New York and Ohio and in New York the almost sixteen thousand liberty votes provided more than the margin by which Polk captured the state and consequently won the election. Clay's trimming had turned many Whig abolitionists away from his support. This swelled the Liberty vote, but guaranteed Polk's election and the success of a joint resolution, backed by the lame-duck President Tyler, inviting Texas to join the Union.

After the election the Liberty Party leaders determined to do all in their power to prevent the consummation of the annexation scheme.[2] In this way they were joined by a considerable number of Bay State Whigs. Stanton, Joseph Lovejoy and other abolitionists had the opportunity to address one thousand delegates to a Whig dominated convention held in Faneuil Hall in late January of 1845. Some very influential men were in the audience; thus the abolitionists had an opportunity to reach men that they had never been able to communicate with before.[1] Cooperation against the admission of Texas was the keynote of the convention and a committee of correspondence was appointed to seek a mutual effort to achieve the common objective.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 23, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Ibid.

After President Tyler signed the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas on March 1, 1845, the Young Whigs planned to work to secure the passage of resolutions in the Massachusetts legislature against the joint resolution. However, throughout the spring and early summer of 1845, the Young Whigs engaged in little anti-Texas activity; only the abolitionists kept up the agitation.[3] In August the abolitionist campaign against annexation was given a boost by the Whig, Henry Wilson, who urged the formation of a non-partisan anti-Texas organization. At a public meeting in Concord in September, a permanent committee with this aim was appointed, with a Whig chairman. When the Young Whigs showed some reluctance to join in the movement, the abolitionists seized the initiative, named Samuel Sewall as chairman of the committee, and called an anti-Texas meeting for October

---

[1] Elizur Wright to Salmon P. Chase, January 30, 1849, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] L. C. Phillips, Charles Allen and Charles Francis Adams to Salmon P. Chase, June 25, 1845, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Kinley J. Brauer, "The Massachusetts State Texas Committee: A Last Stand Against the Annexation of Texas," Journal of American History, LI (1964), 216n.

21 at Cambridge.[1]

Charles Francis Adams and Wilson represented the Young Whigs at Cambridge and participated in the formation of the Massachusetts State Texas Committee and its organ, the Free State Rally and Texas Chainbreaker, to be edited by Elizur Wright. The new committee urged protest meetings throughout the North, an ambitious petition campaign and planned a mass meeting to be held in Faneuil Hall on November 4.[2] Despite a downpour there was a large turnout for the meeting.[3] Stanton, anxious to placate those Whig allies who abhorred what they regarded as abolitionist extremism made a moderate speech as did Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner and Charles Francis Adams.[4] All of these speakers, as well as John G. Palfrey, the Whig congressman, Garrison, Elizur Wright and Whittier were appointed to a committee of thirty-nine which was to lead the fight against the annexation of Texas.[5] The committee worked ambitiously. An Anti-Texas petition was circulated throughout the state, dozens of meetings protesting annexation were held and scores of resolutions were sent to Congress.[6]

---

[1] Kinley J. Brauer, "The Massachusetts State Texas Committee," Journal of American History, LI (1964), 214-218.

[2] Ibid., pp. 218-219.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 5, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] Brauer, op. cit., p. 222.

[5] The Emancipator and Weekly Chronicle [Boston], November 12, 1845, p. 114.

[6] Brauer, op. cit., p. 223.

The cooperation of Whigs and abolitionists in Massachusetts led the New York Herald to predict the formation of a new party joining all of the Whigs, all of the Liberty men and one-third of the Democrats.[1] In New York there were rumblings of discontent among some Democrats over their party's Texas policy. But the time had not yet arrived for a major breakup in the parties.

An anti-slavery remonstrance, which had been widely circulated by the Texas committee, was brought to Congress by Henry Wilson and John Greenleaf Whittier early in December. It was presented to the House of Representatives by John Quincy Adams and laid on the table without discussion.[2] With this the anti-Texas committee prepared to bring its labors to a close. Stanton thought that it had done good work, but that it would not prevent annexation. With the dissolution of the committee, Stanton thought that Adams, Palfrey, S. C. Phillips and other Young Whigs would return to their party and that they would probably be swept into supporting a slaveholder for President in 1848.[3]

On December 16 the House voted to admit Texas. The Senate followed suit six days later and Polk signed the measure on December 29. Whittier grieved, "The slave power rules Congress completely, absolutely."[1]

---

[1] Elizur Wright to John G. Whittier, November 22, 1845, Whittier Papers, Oak Knoll Collections, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.

[2] Kinley Brauer, "The Massachusetts State Texas Committee," Journal of American History, LI (1964), 229.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

The hope that a permanent coalition with the Young Whigs would result died with the annexation of Texas. Stanton and Whittier agreed that the Young Whigs would not break with their party and they determined to stoke the Liberty Party furnace and prepare for the next election.[2] Stanton and the Liberty men had learned that unity with segments of major parties was possible, but delicate, and that it depended upon the existence of a live issue upon which all could agree. The annexation of Texas had proved to be such an issue, but it had passed. The abolitionists had to await the development of another issue before unity could again be sought.

Cooperation with the Young Whigs on the Texas issue did not prevent Stanton from laboring arduously for the Liberty Party during the closing months of 1845. He labored to raise a superstructure on the foundation of political organization that had already been laid. The West, he believed, had begun the work and the East had yet to do its part. He issued the Call for a Great Eastern Convention, opening it to all who were determined to vote for the abolition of slavery.[3]

---

[1] John G. Whittier to Elizur Wright, December 16, 1845, Samuel T. Pickard (ed.), Whittier as a Politician, Illustrated by His Letters to Professor Elizur Wright (Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1900), p. 43.

[2] John G. Whittier to Henry B. Stanton, April 8, 1846, photostatic copy, John G. Whittier Papers, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts.

[3] "Call for Attendance at the Great Eastern Convention," by Henry B. Stanton (Chairman) and Elizur Wright (Secretary), September 11, 1845, Oberlin College Autograph Collection.

Boston was selected as the site of the convention since it was the center of the most thoroughly abolitionist portion of New England.[1] Stanton did everything in preparation for the convention but write the resolutions and the address.[2] Over two thousand delegates attended the convention which met October 1, and over three thousand comprised the audience to hear the speeches. Delegates came from every free state and Wisconsin, Iowa and the District of Columbia. General Samuel Fessenden presided over the convention which listened to many excellent speeches and the reading of letters, "good, bad and indifferent," from such notables as William H. Seward, Charles Francis Adams, Stephen C. Phillips, and Theodore Sedgwick. Stanton had hoped that Whittier would write the address for the convention, but when he didn't, Gerrit Smith's was accepted. Stanton thought the address able, but elementary. Stanton joked to Chase, "Captain Jonathan Walker showed his branded hand to the audience, Miss Delia Webster showed her homely face, etc."[3]

Stanton was pleased with the resolutions of the convention. Lysander Spooner's controversial resolutions claiming that slavery in the states was unconstitutional were not adopted. Two other thorny issues, the expansion of the anti-slavery platform to other issues such as the bank and the tariff, and the expression of a preference for the next Presidential candidate, were avoided. Stanton thought that Amos Phelps' resolutions on the "moral and Biblical bearings of our cause" were "strong and right," but out of place, an opinion that he undoubtedly would not have had ten years before. Stanton was well on the way to the belief that what was not politically advantageous was irrelevant or actually damaging to the cause.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 5, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, October 6, 1845, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, October 6, 1845, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Walker was captured in the South and branded "S.S." (slave stealer) for helping slaves to escape to the Bahamas. His hand was often displayed to illustrate the brutality of the slavocrats. Miss Webster's defect had natural causes.

The convention was a great success. Stanton, because of his labors, suffered from complete exhaustion at its conclusion. He was laid up with a severe headache and other ills for five days.[1] He recovered in time to pitch himself into the election campaign. He spoke throughout Massachusetts and took a trip to New Hampshire where he lent his assistance to John P. Hale, the congressman whose opposition to Texas annexation had led the party leaders in that state to withdraw his nomination for another term.[2] Stanton also made arrangements for transportation, room, board, subordinate speakers and publicity for a lecture tour that Gerrit Smith made in various towns in Massachusetts before the election.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, October 6, 1845, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, Monday P.M., n.d., Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Hubbard to Henry B. Stanton, Monday [October] 27, 1845 and J. E. Carter to Henry B. Stanton, October 27, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University; and Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 127.

The election returns disappointed Stanton. Although the Liberty vote had not dropped off as much as that of the Democrats and Whigs, it was down eighteen per cent from 1844 and was almost seven per cent less than the vote received in 1843. All in all, the year 1845 had been a calamity. Texas had been annexed and war with Mexico seemed in the offing. Stanton lamented to his friend, Gerrit Smith: "What will become of our wicked country, a righteous God only knows."[2] Yet even in his most somber moods, Stanton revealed optimism. A war with Mexico, he thought, would bring British involvement. The British would strike at southern ports and occupy southern territory. The North could then demand the abolition of slavery in return for assistance in expelling the invaders. "If anything could reconcile me to a war," he told Gerrit Smith, "it would be the overthrow of our giant sin."[3]

In his fantasies, Stanton was assuming that the North would demand the abolition of slavery. But rousing the North to demand abolition was precisely the objective that the abolitionists had failed to reach. If this were achieved, and "If war should happen, the slaves might be emancipated at an enormous expense of bloodshed."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, October 24, 1845; Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, n.d., on back of letter from Julius L. Clark to Henry B. Stanton, October 28, 1845; George M. Sterling to Gerrit Smith, October 28, 1845; Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, October 29, November 5, Monday P.M., n.d. [November 3?, 1845], November 3, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Syracuse University, Carnegie Library; and Henry B. Stanton, October 23, 1845 to The Emancipator [Boston], October 29, 1845, p. 106.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Ibid.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1845, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

CHAPTER IX

MAN OF ONE IDEA

The annexation of Texas was technically a defeat for the Liberty Party men. However many Democrats and Whigs, particularly the latter, were growing restive at the pro-Southern policies of the national government, thus raising the possibility of a merger of anti-slavery forces.

The annexation of Texas by the United States had angered Mexico and provoked threats of war. A dispute over the proper boundaries of Texas, complicated by the occupation of the disputed territory by United States troops and the refusal of the Mexican government to recognize or negotiate with the mission headed by John Slidell, brought the two nations to the brink of war. Late in April, 1846, a force of Mexicans fired on American troops stationed on the Rio Grande. At President Polk's bidding, Congress declared that a state of war existed between the United States and the Republic of Mexico.

Abolitionists were not surprised at the turn of events. To Stanton war had been provoked by a slaveholding President and his slaveholding advisers "for the benefit of their darling institution." Here was but one more example of the insatiable avarice of the Slave Power.[1] Stanton believed that the opponents of the war should use all available means to end hostilities. He urged the withholding of supplies from the army, the recall of American troops, and the "begging pardon of Mexico for having acted towards her the part of bandits and robbers. . . ."[1] This became the policy of the Liberty Party and was accepted with practically no dissent.[2]

---

[1] Editorial (believed to be by Stanton), The Emancipator [Boston], February 24, 1847, p. 174.

Most noteworthy, however, was the effect of the news of the commencement of hostilities on the non-abolitionists. Politicians who had once dismissed the notion of a Slave Power as abolitionist rhetoric were forced to reconsider. Some northern Democrats began to murmur aloud, but it was from members of the Whig Party that the most signigicant protest came. Paradoxically, Stanton both welcomed and feared the Whig uproar over the war. The danger was that the Whigs would succeed in luring many Liberty men back to their former political allegiance, leaving the Liberty Party an empty husk. If the Liberty Party were to be annihilated, Stanton wanted its principles to be embodied in the program of a party that would carry them to fruition. The Whig Party, Stanton believed, was not a likely vehicle. In September of 1846, from the gallery of Faneuil Hall, Stanton watched the state convention at which the Conscience Whigs attempted to swing the party in Massachusetts to an anti-slavery, anti-war position. At the crucial moment in the convention,

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Giddings, November 15, 1847, Joshua Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

[2] The Emancipator [Boston], February 2, 1848, p. 2.

Daniel Webster was brought to the dais to issue a call for Whig unity. The radical resolutions of the Conscience Whigs were thereupon laid on the table. Stanton knew then that the Whig Party could not lead the way to anti-slavery reform.[1] Conscience Whigs would be encouraged to join the Liberty Party ranks, but no hope was entertained that the "dull learners" who comprised the bulk of the Whig Party would ever be deserving of abolitionist support. The Whigs, Stanton thought, were straddlers; they opposed the war just enough to drive out the peace men. When David Wilmot, Democrat of Pennsylvania, introduced in Congress a resolution to exclude slavery from all lands to be acquired from Mexico, the Whigs pursued a cautious policy which lost them the enemies of the Proviso without winning over its friends. The Whigs missed all of their opportunities, Stanton believed, and could not be trusted.[2]

Stanton correctly perceived the schizophrenic nature of the Whig Party. The intensity of his dislike for that party suggests, however, that a deeper feeling underlay his hostility. As an enterprising young politician in Rochester in the 1820's, Stanton had optimistically regarded the Whig Party as the harbinger of progress, the agency for fulfilling the nation's destiny. Finney's revival had changed all that; it had enlisted him in a greater cause and altered his perspective of the political scene. The America which he had thought to be moving toward a lofty destiny came to be seen as a nation hurtling toward its doom. When it had become clear to him that the Whig Party lacked the capacity to save the nation, he had been deeply embittered.

---

[1] David Donald, Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961), pp. 146-148; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 149-150.

[2] Lead editorial [believed to be by Stanton], The Emancipator [Boston], September 22, 1847, p. 2.

With the election of 1846 approaching, an article entitled "Stick to Our Own Candidates," signed by "S" appeared in The Emancipator. It urged abolitionists not to support even such anti-slavery Whigs as Palfrey, King, and Hudson, even though they had opposed the Mexican War. Since they had given no support to Liberty men, abolitionists were advised that they should give no aid to Whig candidates.[1]

Since the possibility that the Whig organization could become an anti-slavery party was remote, a number of Liberty men began giving more serious thought to broadening the program of the Liberty Party to attract voters from the major parties. The advocates of this plan maintained that the Liberty Party had to take a stand on such issues as the national bank and the tariff if it was ever to become the ruling party of the country. As early as the fall of 1845, James Birney had advocated a broad program. As he phrased it, "We must be prepared to take on ourselves all the administration of the government or none of it."[2]

---

[1] Editorial [believed to be by Stanton], The Emancipator [Boston], October 28, 1846, p. 106.

[2] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, September 12, 1845, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1938), II, 970-971.

Gerrit Smith, one of the most influential men in the party, had been, as late as May of 1847, opposed to a broadening of the Liberty platform, maintaining that such a practice would drive good men from the party.[1] A month or two later, however, Smith changed his mind completely and became a staunch advocate of the multi-plank platform.[2] The devotees of the new proposal made use of Smith's prestige to gain support for their movement and called a convention at Macedon Lock, New York. There they adopted a platform advocating free trade, free homesteads and nominated Gerrit Smith to run for the office of President of the United States.[3] The Liberty Leaguers, as the Gerrit Smith-William Goodell forces called themselves, also adopted the doctrine of Lysander Spooner of Massachusetts and Alvin Stewart of New York, that slavery was everywhere unconstitutional.[4]

Although Stanton shared with the Liberty Leaguers a lack of faith in the Whig Party, he was vehemently opposed to the Macedon Lock program. He turned the full force of The Emancipator editorials on the schismatics, whom he called the "Macedonians."[1] Stanton could not see why the Liberty Party should take a stand on issues that would be obsolete when the party would be called upon to govern.[2] Stanton's position was consistent with the one he had taken when Garrison had attempted to mix other causes with anti-slavery. However, some Liberty men impugned his motives. L. P. Noble, the publisher, suspected that Stanton's opposition to Liberty League doctrines were a result of his desire to turn the Liberty Party over to one of the major parties.[3] Noble did not understand Stanton whose pragmatic nature gave him a flexibility which was lacking in most of the old-guard abolitionists. To Stanton, at that time, nothing was fixed but his desire to overturn slavery. He did not rule out the possibility that the Liberty Party would merge itself in some broader movement, but he was not in a position to control events taking place outside of the Liberty Party; he could only respond to them. He wanted to prevent the party from taking an irreversible position which would prevent it from seizing upon any opportunity that presented itself. The Liberty Party could grow and prosper on the slavery issue alone. Since victory at the polls was not possible, there was no point to driving from the party sound abolitionists offended by positions taken on extraneous issues. The Liberty Leaguers, however, were impatient. They maintained their organization, continued to press for acceptance of their doctrines, and prepared resolutions affirming the Macedon Lock position which they planned to introduce at the nominating convention of the Liberty Party to be held in October of 1847.

---

[1] Gerrit Smith, printed letter "To the Liberty Party," May 7, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[2] Gerrit Smith, July 3, 1847, to The Emancipator [Boston], July 21, 1847, p. 1.

[3] Address of the Macedon Convention by William Goodell and Letters of Gerrit Smith (Albany: S. W. Green, 1847), p. 3.

[4] L. P. Noble to Gerrit Smith, September n.d., 1847, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], May 26, 1847, p. 2; September 8, 1847, p. 2; November 24, 1847, p. 2; December 8, 1847, p. 2; L. P. Noble to Gerrit Smith, September n.d., 1847, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Lead editorial [believed to be by Stanton], The Emancipator [Boston], September 8, 1847, p. 2.

[3] L. P. Noble to Gerrit Smith, September, n.d., 1847, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Meanwhile Stanton bent his efforts toward the selection of a Liberty candidate who could unite all factions and attract anti-slavery Whigs and Democrats. James G. Birney, who had carried the Liberty standard twice, was out of the running because of a crippling injury which he had received in 1845. Even if Birney had been entirely well, Stanton undoubtedly would not have supported his candidacy. Major party voters were needed to swell the Liberty totals and Birney's name would not draw them. Moreover, Birney's adherence to the Macedon Lock program was a repudiation of the "One Idea" philosophy which the majority of the party continued to accept.

William H. Seward, the former New York governor, a power in the Whig Party, and a man of distinctly anti-slavery leanings was a possibility. Stanton would have supported him if he had declared himself an unqualified supporter of the Liberty program.[1] Seward, however, was much too opportunistic a politician to cast his lot with a third party.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, March 12, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

By July of 1847, Stanton was sure that he had his man. It was John P. Hale, the Granite Lion, the maverick Democrat who had courageously bucked the party organization of his state on the Texas annexation issue, denounced the Mexican War, and yet had been elected to the United States Senate.[1] Not only was Hale sound on the principal issues, Stanton informed Salmon P. Chase, but he would draw votes from both major parties, particularly in New York and New England. He would, Stanton opined, draw more votes than any other Liberty candidate.[2]

Despite Hale's qualifications, Stanton anticipated difficulty in inducing Liberty men to nominate a candidate who had never belonged to their party or to an abolition society and who was not known personally by many Liberty leaders. Hale, moreover, was not completely orthodox on abolitionism; he was not convinced that Congress had the power under the Constitution either to end the interstate slave trade or to abolish slavery in the nation's capital. But Hale loathed slavery and opposed with vigor the extension of that institution. He had to be the candidate, Stanton insisted. If the Liberty men did not accept Hale, Stanton told Chase, rather than support a nugatory candidate he would support a Wilmot Proviso man put forth by either major party or a faction thereof.[1] This was the first indication that Stanton would be willing to support a popular anti-slavery extension movement rather than remain with a weak abolitionist party. Nevertheless, in 1847, Stanton preferred a strong Liberty candidate. Hale's availability, for the time being at least, kept Stanton a Liberty man.

---

[1] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 52-85.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 17, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Stanton set about to arrange a marriage between Hale and the Liberty Party. He told the New Hampshire Senator that many anti-slavery men had evidenced a strong desire to have him as the candidate because he would draw more votes than anyone else. Then, with increased Liberty Party vote totals in 1848, the political abolitionists could prepare to launch a "new and broader party" to take the field in the 1852 campaign. To sell the Senator-elect on the nomination and the Liberty leaders on Hale, Stanton arranged a meeting to discuss matters.[2] Hale asked to bring his associates Amos Tuck and George Fogg to the conference scheduled for July 24 in Boston.[3] Stanton brought Lewis Tappan, Joshua Leavitt, John G. Whittier, Joseph Lovejoy, Dr. Charles D. Cleveland of Pennsylvania and Austin Willey of Maine. At the meeting Hale indicated that he was with the Liberty Party, as Stanton phrased it, "in principles, measures and feelings." The Senator-elect from New Hampshire expressed his wish that the nominating convention could be postponed until the spring, but he suggested that he would not refuse the nomination of the Liberty Party if it were offered to him; at least this was Stanton's inference.[1] In fact, Hale was reluctant to accept the nomination for the Presidency.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 17, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, July 6, 1847, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, July 12, 1847, John G. Whittier Papers, Friends Historical Society of Swarthmore.

At the same time that Stanton and his friends were negotiating with Hale, L. P. Noble was sending a circular throughout the country, urging Liberty men to nominate Gerrit Smith at the coming Buffalo Convention. Stanton was perturbed. He told Chase that if the Peterboro philanthropist were nominated, he did not think that he would vote for him. He reiterated his intention to vote for a major party Wilmot Proviso man if Hale was denied the place at the head of the ticket.[3]

Stanton was determined to make every effort to secure support for Hale before the convention met. On September 1, he published in The Emancipator a three column editorial on Hale, reviewing his opposition in Congress to the gag rule and the "Texas plot," his

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, August 1, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 96.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, August 6, 1847, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

"broad and radical anti-slavery ground," and his denunciation of the annexation of Texas and the Mexican War. Referring to his hero as the "New Hampshire Revolutionist," Stanton avowed that "the highest dictates of duty and policy call upon the party to confer it [the nomination] upon him. . . ."[1]

Hale, for his part, was giving little aid to his supporters, and Stanton urged him to make a more definite statement affirming his willingness to accept the nomination, even offering to write the statement for him.[2] Stanton also took to the stump to convince Liberty voters that Hale was with them and that they should be with him.[3]

All of the free states but Iowa were represented at the convention which met at Buffalo on Wednesday, October 20. Three schools of thought predominated. Stanton, Leavitt and Lewis Tappan were leaders of the group pressing for the immediate nomination of Hale. Salmon P. Chase led the faction which, although not hostile to Hale, wanted a postponement of the nomination until the spring when, because of the scuffles taking place within the major parties over the Wilmot Proviso, a new broadly-based party might be an eventuality. The third group at the convention was composed of the supporters of Gerrit Smith, who hoped to commit the Liberty Party to their Liberty League program and their candidate.

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], September 1, 1847, p. 2; Stanton is identified as the author in Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, September 10, 1847, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John Hale, September 10, 1847, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] The Emancipator [Boston], August 11, 1847, p. 2; A. Josselyn, September 18, 1847, to The Emancipator, September 29, 1847, p. 2.

Stanton, Salmon P. Chase and other practical abolitionists had marshalled their forces for the test at Buffalo. They succeeded in tabling a resolution, introduced by a Gerrit Smith supporter, George Bradburn, holding that the Liberty Party should not nominate anyone who did not affirm the unconstitutionality of slavery. When Smith offered a resolution calling slavery unconstitutional everywhere in the union, the motion was also tabled and finally defeated by a vote of 195-137, largely through the efforts of Salmon P. Chase.[1] On the second day of the meeting Smith introduced a modified version of the multi-plank proposition, asking that the Liberty Party study the duties it must perform when the government comes into its hands. Although Stanton admired Smith's "able, ingenious, eloquent and conciliatory speech" on behalf of his resolution, he disliked the tendency of the proposal. He along with Owen Lovejoy and Chase spoke against Smith's resolution and it was defeated by a vote of 103-26.[2] The Liberty Party was thus recommitted to the "One Idea" philosophy.

After the coalition of Stanton and Chase forces had put down the Liberty League program, they divided over the timing of the nominations for national office. When Chase moved to postpone nominations Stanton successfully engineered the tabling of the motion.[1] With Leavitt and Lewis Tappan, Stanton circulated among the delegates using all of his powers of persuasion to convince them that Hale was a sound supporter of the Liberty program and that he should be nominated immediately.[2] By the second day of the convention, they were convinced that their efforts had been effective and that Hale would be nominated. On Thursday evening, Chase's motion for postponement was taken from the table and defeated by a vote of 128-37. On an informal ballot, John P. Hale received 103 votes for President. Gerrit Smith received forty-four votes and eleven votes went to other candidates. Hale was then nominated unanimously and Leicester King of Ohio was chosen to be his running mate.[3] Hale remained hesitant and did not formally accept the nomination until January 1, 1848. Then he expressed his willingness to withdraw if a general movement of anti-slavery men was forthcoming.[4]

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], November 10, 1847, pp. 2-3; National Era [Washington, D. C.], November 11, 1847, p. 1.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, October 25, 1847, to The Emancipator [Boston], October 27, 1847, p. 2; The Emancipator [Boston], November 10, 1847, p. 3.

The platform, largely the work of Chase, advocated freedom for all of the territories of the United States. It contained provisions aimed at reducing the political power of the slave states through the repeal of the Three-Fifths Compromise and the redrawing of judicial districts to remove the advantage existing in favor of the South. Relief for the Negro was advocated through the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law of 1793, the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia and the repeal of discriminatory state laws. Abolition of slavery in the states where it existed was not within the range of possibility as the Liberty politicians well knew. With the exception of advocacy of the abolition of the interstate slave trade, which was omitted from the platform, possibly to placate Hale, the political abolitionists had considered all practical methods by which they could hem in slavery and encourage its demise. They affirmed that Wilmot Provisoism, or non-extension, was insufficient for anti-slavery men. The party, believing the Mexican War part of a slave-owners' plot to extend slavery, called for its termination and the withdrawal of American armies.[1]

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], November 10, 1847, p. 3.

[2] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, November 9, 1847, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; Austin Willey to John P. Hale, November 5, 1847, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] The Emancipator [Boston], October 27, 1847, p. 2 and November 10, 1847, p. 3. The Liberty Leaguers, having failed to secure an acceptable platform or the nomination of their candidate, formed a new, but weak, National Liberty Party and nominated Gerrit Smith as their candidate for President.

[4] John P. Hale to Samuel Lewis, January 1, 1848, National Era [Washington, D. C.], January 27, 1848, p. 14.

Hale's nomination augured well for an increased Liberty Party vote but many problems remained, not the least of which was the lure of the Whig Party. It appeared to Stanton that Henry Clay was a strong contender for the Whig Presidential nomination. Defections from the Liberty ranks of former Whigs who regretted the part which they had played in Clay's defeat in 1844 seemed likely. Moreover many anti-slavery Whigs would be inclined to remain true to their party if Clay's image could in any way be reconciled with their anti-slavery pronouncements. Stanton, who had once admired Clay greatly, had come to regard him as devoid of principle and untrustworthy. Stanton wanted to scotch any attempt to portray Clay as an anti-slavery candidate.[1] His use of the columns of The Emancipator for this purpose led him to lock horns with Joshua Giddings, the Ohio Whig congressman who had played a leading role in the campaign against the gag rule. Stanton accused Giddings, a long-time supporter of Henry Clay, of "ingeniously but deceptively" trying to represent his party and the Kentucky politician as opponents of the extension of slavery. Clay, in a speech at Lexington, Kentucky, had asked for a disavowal by Congress of any desire to acquire territory for the purpose of propagating slavery. Stanton regarded Clay's proposition as a fraud and deception. Clay knew full well, the editor of The Emancipator maintained, that Anglo-Saxons always got the land they wanted. The real issue was not whether land was to be acquired, but whether, once it was added, slavery would be allowed there. Since Clay took no position on that issue, he was not a Wilmot Proviso man.[2] Stanton accused Giddings of being more of a Whig than an abolitionist and was convinced that the congressman from the Western Reserve would be perfectly willing to support Clay if he would come out with a wishy-washy statement on annexation and war.[1]

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], November 3, 1847, p. 2.

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], November 17, 1847, p. 2.

[2] Lead editorial [believed to be by Stanton], The Emancipator [Boston], November 24, 1847, p. 2.

The failure of the Liberty Leaguers to abandon their candidates and their program after Hale's nomination also caused Stanton much concern and he strove to lessen their influence among the abolitionists. Early in 1848, on his way to Washington where he was going to argue before the Supreme Court for his law clients, Stanton paid a visit to Theodore and Angelina Weld in Belleville, New Jersey. Weld had retired from the anti-slavery movement, but his views were still highly regarded by abolitionists. Stanton reported that during their conversations, Weld had stated that the Liberty Party as a political movement was preferable to the Liberty League, which would make a cumbersome political machine because of the complexity and number of principles which it espoused. The Liberty Party, however, was simple and efficient.[2] When James G. Birney heard of Stanton's report he was surprised and wrote to Weld, asking if Stanton had presented his remarks correctly. Weld had not seen any of the statements attributed to him, but told Birney: "Still, were I to select from our old friends, one as a mouth piece to proclaim my opinions, our good friend, H. B. Stanton would certainly not be my choice. His structure and habit of mind both lead him to confound his own inferences from a doctrine with the doctrine itself."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Giddings, November 15, 1847, Joshua Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society.

[2] "S" [Henry B. Stanton], February 4, 1848, The Emancipator [Boston], February 9, 1848, p. 2.

In his effort to put down the Liberty Leaguers, Stanton drew another retired anti-slavery veteran into the fray. Alvan Stewart, whose name was highly respected by New York Liberty men, was said to have deplored the schism in the ranks.[2] The implication was that the Smith men were the schismatics, whether or not Stewart meant this.

Stanton's legal duties in Washington did not prevent his close observation of the political scene. With John G. Whittier, Stanton visited the Senate chamber.[3] His impressions were recorded in The Emancipator. Senator John Davis of Massachusetts was "a mass of inefficiency and immobility," Stanton told his readers. He noted that although the Massachusetts legislature had refused to equip its regiments in the Mexican War, a majority of its representatives in Washington voted its thanks to the army. Webster was absent from the vote, while John Palfrey, in the House, abstained. Thomas Corwin, the Ohio Whig who had spoken against the war in 1847, voted affirmatively on thanking Generals Scott and Taylor for their services. Stanton added, "I watched him when he voted. The aye seemed to stick in his throat."[1]

---

[1] Theodore Weld to James Birney, December 6, 1848, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: D. Appleton Century Company, 1938), II, 1120.

[2] "S" [Henry B. Stanton], February 4, 1848, The Emancipator [Boston], February 9, 1848, p. 2.

[3] William L. Chaplin to James Birney, February 10, 1848, Dumond, op. cit., p. 1092.

Although Stanton enjoyed condemning Whigs for their hypocrisy there was one member of that party for whom Stanton never lost his respect. On the morning of February 21, Stanton visited this old statesman, John Quincy Adams, in the lower house.[2] During the session that day a motion was about to be put to the House to thank some generals under Scott and Taylor when Adams, seemingly trying to speak, reached convulsively toward the corner of his desk. Seeing Adams thus stricken, Stanton called out to Washington Hunt, "Look to Mr. Adams, he is falling in his chair." By that time several members had rushed to Adams, one crying, "Mr. Adams is dying." Adams was foaming at the mouth and was taken up to the rotunda and laid on a sofa, then carried to the Speaker's chamber.[3] On the evening of February 23, "Old Man Eloquent" died. Stanton lamented that despite all of the tributes and eulogies, no mention was made of the struggle for the freedom of petition and of debate which the old warrior had conducted. To Stanton, Adams' battle with the Slave Power had been "the sublimest spectacle of the age."[4] Stanton hoped that the seat which was left vacant by Adams' death would be filled by another Adams, Charles Francis, who would continue the resistance to the Slave Power and prevent the expansion of the peculiar institution into the territory to be acquired from Mexico.[1]

---

[1] [Henry B. Stanton], February 16, 1848 to The Emancipator [Boston], February 23, 1848, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 158.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, February 21, 1848, to The Emancipator [Boston], March 1, 1848, p. 2.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, February 24, 1848, to The Emancipator [Boston], March 1, 1848, p. 2.

Despite his efforts to keep the Liberty Party unified around the "One Idea," anti-slavery, and to prevent defections to the Whigs and the Liberty Leaguers, Stanton knew that a broad-based party offered the only hope of significant success for the cause. He was not prepared, however, to give up the "One Idea" Liberty party until a new party, sound and firm on the slavery question, and capable of attracting mass support had emerged. The Liberty League under Smith and Goodell would not do, of course, nor would either major party as then constituted.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, February 25, 1848, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University. The seat was won by the anti-slavery Whig, Horace Mann.

CHAPTER X

STANTON BECOMES A FREE DEMOCRAT

In February of 1848, Stanton left Washington where he had been conducting law business before the Supreme Court, to spend some time with his wife and three sons--Gerrit Smith Stanton had been born in September of 1845--in the home to which they had recently moved in Seneca Falls, New York. Stanton had suffered inflammation of the lungs which he believed was induced by the east winds in Massachusetts and had long planned to move to a region which offered both a milder climate and opportunity for an enterprising lawyer.[1] Western New York met both of these requirements and the Cady family owned land in Seneca Falls. Although Stanton had to leave behind the state party which he had done so much to strengthen, he was encouraged by the prospects of the Liberty Party in New York, which had been run with energy and enthusiasm.[2]

Stanton's removal to New York coincided with the intensification of a serious dispute within the Democratic Party of the Empire State.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 20, 1843, May 20, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, May 1, 1844, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to John Greenleaf Whittier, July 20, 1844, John Albree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence From the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), p. 92; and Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, February 25, 1848, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 20, 1844, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; and Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, February 3, 1844, Albree, op. cit., pp. 86-87.

The opportunity for a broad-based anti-slavery party appeared bright and Stanton became a close observer of a fascinating movement in American political history.

Conflict within the New York Democracy over taxation, debt, and canal expansion policies had raged almost continuously for two decades. In 1842, the fiscally cautious faction of the party, known as the "Radicals," had succeeded in passing the "Stop and Tax Law" which had halted all but the most urgent work on the canal system until revenues from a direct tax could provide the funds for expansion. By 1843, the Radicals were being called by their opponents "Barnburners," probably after the legend of the Dutch farmer who burned down his barn to get rid of the rats. The implication was that the Radicals were willing to destroy public works and corporations in order to stop the abuses connected with them. By 1847, the Radicals had accepted the designation "Barnburners" for themselves.[1]

Former President Martin Van Buren, his son John, and the popular former United States Senator, Silas Wright, became leaders of the Barnburner group.[2] The feud between the Barnburners and the "Conservative" or "Hunker" wings of the Democratic party had assumed national significance in 1844, when Martin Van Buren lost the nomination to the Tennessean, James K. Polk. Van Buren's opposition to Texas annexation and his association with the northern radical wing of the party, which had been zealous for equality and human rights, had cost him the support of Southern Democrats and his renomination.[1] The Polk forces had offered the Vice Presidency to Silas Wright, who, out of respect for Van Buren, and a desire to lead his party to victory in New York refused office and ran instead for governor. Wright had been elected over Millard Fillmore, his Whig opponent, by twice the plurality which Polk received over Clay in the state, indicating the popularity of the faction of the party to which he belonged.[2] After Polk's victory, Van Buren had asked the President-elect to appoint his lieutenant, Benjamin Butler, Secretary of State. Instead Polk had offered Butler the War Department, which was refused. He had then appointed William Marcy of the Conservative faction in New York to head the War Department. Van Buren had been humiliated and the Barnburners alienated.[3]

---

[1] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), pp. 25-33.

[2] Ibid., p. 42.

In the New York legislature the Conservative Democrats had allied with the Whigs to pass a canal expansion bill which Governor Wright had promptly vetoed. The split had widened. When Wright had run for re-election in 1846 he had been defeated by his Whig opponent, John Young, by over eleven thousand votes. Addison Gardiner, the

---

[1] Glyndon G. Van Deusen, The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848 (The New American Nation Series, ed. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Torchbook edition; New York: Harper and Row, 1963), p. 184.

[2] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), p. 59.

[3] Ibid., pp. 63-64.

Democratic candidate for Lieutenant Governor, who had been backed by both Democratic factions, had defeated his Whig opponent by a larger total than Young had received over Wright. Many Democrats had failed to vote for Wright and he and his friends had accused the Conservatives of perfidy.[1] President Polk had also believed that the Hunkers had betrayed their party's gubernatorial nominee. He had told his Secretary of State, James Buchanan, "This faction [the Hunkers] shall here after receive no favour at my hands if I know it."[2] Many of the Barnburners came to believe, however, that Polk, fearing the soft-spoken and popular Wright as a future presidential rival, had had a hand in the conspiracy to defeat him.[3]

The defeat of Silas Wright, and his death on August 28, 1847, had made him a martyr to the Barnburners and intensified the bitterness between the rival Democratic factions. The Barnburners then identified their Hunker rivals with the dominant and anti-Van Buren southern wing of their national party. Moreover, many of the Barnburners had shown antipathy to slavery and nearly all favored the Wilmot Proviso. The atmosphere had been electric at the Syracuse Convention of the state party in September of 1847, little more than a week after Wright's death. Henry B. Stanton had watched from the gallery as the Barnburners tried to commit the convention to opposition to the extension of slavery. The Hunkers had managed to table the motion by a vote of seventy-three to sixty-three.[1] James Wadsworth, a party leader from Genesee County, had expressed the intense anger of the Barnburners. "It may be too late to do justice to Salas Wright, but it is not too late to do justice to his assassins."[2] Many Barnburners had walked out of the convention, leaving the Hunkers in complete control, and had called their own convention for October 26 at Herkimer.[3] Churchill C. Cambreling, John Van Buren and David Wilmot had given the major addresses at Herkimer. Wilmot, the author of the controversial anti-slavery proviso, had referred to the need to protect free soil "from the unlawful and violent aggressions of slavery." He had condemned the "attitude of insulting defiance by the South" and the "demands of the Slave

---

[1] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), pp. 68-76; and John A. Garraty, Silas Wright (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 379-382.

[2] Allan Nevins (ed.), Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849 (New York: Longmans Green and Company, 1952), entry for November 5, 1846, p. 161.

[3] John Bigelow, The Life of Samuel J. Tilden (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1895), I, 116.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 159-160; Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), p. 93; Henry M. Field, The Life of David Dudley Field (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), p. 115.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 160; Willis F. Johnson, 1822-1864 (Vol. II of History of the State of New York Political and Governmental, ed. Ray B. Smith. Syracuse: Syracuse Press, 1922), p. 357.

[3] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners, pp. 94-95.

Power."[1] At a Utica convention in February, which the Hunkers did not attend, a full slate of Barnburner delegates had been chosen to attend the national party convention. John Van Buren, a forceful orator, had expressed to the Utica assembly his "unqualified aversion and disgust for slavery."[2]

Was a new era dawning when Democrats sounded like abolitionists? As a new New Yorker, Henry B. Stanton thought so and wanted Liberty men to take advantage of the opportunity. He urged John P. Hale to write a letter to a New York Democrat pronouncing a eulogy on Silas Wright, whose grave was to the Barnburners "the altar by which they swear."[3] Whittier helped by penning a poem, "The Lost Statesman," in honor of the deceased Democrat.[4]

To praise Wright, the abolitionists had to do some forgetting and forgiving. Wright's record on the slavery issue had not been sound by abolitionist standards. As United Senator in the 1830's, Wright had attempted to keep the subject out of Congress and to soothe Southern nerves concerning the pervasiveness of abolitionist sentiment in the North. Wright had tried to convince the Senate that Northerners were as hostile to the abolitionists as Southerners and, to prove his point, had referred to the Utica mob of 1835, and the mob which had wrecked the office of the Oneida Standard and Democrat because it had printed an abolitionist article.[1]

---

[1] The Emancipator [Boston], November 3, 1847; Charles B. Going, David Wilmot, Free Soiler (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1924), pp. 295-297.

[2] The Emancipator [Boston], March 22, 1848, p. 1.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, March 2, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[4] John A. Garraty, Silas Wright (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), p. 407.

But Wright's betrayal and death had created the image of a true Democrat struck down by Hunkers and slavocrats. The Barnburners had a martyr and the abolitionists an opportunity to nourish a useful myth. Stanton, probing deeper than the oratorical rhetoric, concluded from his conversations with the Barnburner leaders that they were even more radical on the slavery question than they admitted in public. He observed also that the rank and file Democrats were even more opposed to slavery than their spokesmen. To cultivate this strong antislavery sentiment, Stanton urged Hale to come to New York to speak, but to avoid discussing the Mexican War, which, he said had no relevance to the main issue, slavery extension.[2] The spectre of an extraneous issue breaking communications between Liberty men and Democrats and blocking a harmonious assault on the Slave Power haunted Stanton. The "One Issue" that Stanton thought should be the focus of Liberty attention was the expansion of slavery. Abolition of slavery, the ultimate goal, could not be accomplished if the evil were allowed to spread. It would be accomplished if the march of slavery were halted. As The Emancipator had informed its readers in 1847: "Confine it [slavery] to its own limits, restrict it to its own means, and it soon must perish."[1]

---

[1] John A. Garraty, Silas Wright (New York: Columbia University Press, 1949), pp. 165-166. The suggestion that mobs were barometers of public sentiment represented an interesting point of view for a Jacksonian Democrat.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, March 2, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

Stanton looked to the coming Baltimore Democratic convention with anticipation. If the Barnburners were excluded, he thought, they might be induced to support Hale in his campaign for the Presidency. Moreover, if Zachary Taylor, a slaveholder, were to be nominated by the Whigs, Stanton thought that additions to the Liberty camp might come from that party also.[2]

Stanton's hopes about the Baltimore convention were fulfilled. The Barnburners were in an uncompromising mood when they presented their credentials. They claimed to be the legitimate Democratic delegation from New York, would not divide their votes with the Hunkers, and refused to be bound by the decision of the convention. When the Committee on Credentials voted to admit the Hunkers, the Barnburners accused the rival New York faction of being recreant to party principles, treacherous, subversive to party organization and unblushing advocates of slavery extension. They then withdrew from the convention, which proceeded to nominate Lewis Cass, Secretary of War under Jackson, minister to France, and, in 1848, a United States Senator from Michigan. Cass was an outspoken opponent of the Wilmot Proviso, who, in his famous Nicholson letter, had advocated squatter sovereignty, or the doctrine that the settlers of a territory should decide for themselves whether they would have slavery.[1]

---

[1] Editorial [believed to be by Stanton], The Emancipator [Boston], February 24, 1847, p. 174.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Unknown [probably Amos Tuck], May 13, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

At a mass meeting in City Hall Park in New York City, the Barnburners reported the events which had transpired at Baltimore and expressed disapproval of the course of the national party. Churchill Cambreling predicted that the consequences of the controversy would be a death sentence for slavery. A convention to nominate an independent candidate and draw up a platform was planned for Utica.[2]

Stanton was jubilant. He was then ready to cash in his Liberty chips if the Barnburners would come out with a candidate pleasing to all the friends of Free Soil. He recalled that Hale had announced in his letter accepting the Liberty nomination that he would decline in favor of a general anti-slavery movement. Stanton advised Salmon P. Chase to have the coalition of Ohio anti-slavery men hold up their selection of an independent candidate until the New York Barnburners had acted and to use his influence with the New Yorkers to have them put up good candidates and write bold resolutions. Stanton hoped to "secure a harmonious assault on the slave power."[1]

---

[1] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), pp. 100-102; Gustavus Myers, The History of Tammany Hall (New York: The Author, 1901), p. 169; and The Emancipator [Boston], June 7, 1948, p. 2.

[2] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners, pp. 103-104; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 161-162; and Henry M. Field, The Life of David Dudley Field (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), p. 115.

In June, the Barnburners gathered at Utica and nominated Martin Van Buren for President and Henry Dodge for Vice President. Nearly one-third of the platform was devoted to the support of the Wilmot Proviso.[2] The same month an Ohio Free Territory Convention was held in Columbus. A resolution, written by Chase, calling for a convention of all men opposed to the extension of slavery into free territories was approved. The date of the convention, to be held in Buffalo, New York, was set for August 9.[3]

In the meantime, Stanton devoted his efforts to encouraging a union of anti-slavery forces in western New York. He found that the people of that region were strong for Free Soil. Two thousand people attended a Free Soil convention held at Warsaw, Wyoming County, on July 13. Stanton spoke there and declared himself fully for a unity movement, a position supported by the vast majority of the Liberty men of western New York. James Wadsworth, an influential Democrat from Genesee County, another Democrat and two Whigs also spoke in favor of a new party. Stanton observed that large numbers of Whigs and Democrats seemed anxious to bolt their parties. John Van Buren agreed with Stanton, noting that it was impossible to tell a Whig from a Democrat in that portion of the state.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, June 6, 1848, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), pp. 104-107.

[3] Salmon P. Chase to J. L. Trowbridge, March 10, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton's unreserved enthusiasm for the unity movement was not shared by all of the top Liberty men. Lewis Tappan wanted no compromise with those who were not "converted men."[2] He became alarmed when he discovered from conversations with Barnburner leaders that they would go for no one but Van Buren.[3] Many abolitionists could not forget their hostility to the former President who had been their bete noir during his days as President.[4] James G. Birney, who had declined the nomination for re-election to the Vice Presidency of the American and Foreign Slavery Society in protest against the Liberty Party's nomination of Hale, two weeks later announced his support for Hale to forestall a switch of Liberty men to Van Buren.[1] Even more flexible abolitionists like Gamaliel Bailey and John Greenleaf Whittier expressed anxiety over the nomination of Van Buren. Bailey, editor of the National Era, opposed Van Buren because of his previous opposition to the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia.[2] Whittier, Bailey's chief contributor, could not envision Van Buren accepting a platform which could also satisfy Liberty men.[3]

---

[1] Seth M. Gates to Gamaliel Bailey, July 14, 1848, National Era [Washington, D. C.], July 27, 1848, p. 119; Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, July 15, 1848, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University; and John Van Buren to Martin Van Buren, June 26, 1848, Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Amos Tuck to John P. Hale, June 21, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] Lewis Tappan to John B. Hale, August 2, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[4] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, July 1 and 8, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; and Austin Willey to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1848, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton, however, was quite willing to ignore Van Buren's past errors. What Van Buren was willing to do in 1848, and thereafter, was what was important. Stanton could not abide the stubbornness of Liberty men who nourished past resentments at the expense of a movement which might ultimately lead to the accomplishment of the goal for which they had worked for a decade and a half. He told his good friend, John Greenleaf Whittier, that support of Van Buren required no abandonment of principle. Whittier was surprised and accused Stanton of going back on his former position, particularly the ground which he had taken in opposing Henry Clay in 1844. Stanton hastened to support his position. He denied that there was a parallel between 1844 and 1848. The issue in the Clay election was Texas, and Clay was considered by the abolitionists to be wrong in his position. The issue in 1848 was extension of slavery and Van Buren was right on it. The crucial question, Stanton told his good friend, was whether the Liberty men would be willing to vote for a candidate who was not with them on all points. Stanton said that he was; if he had not been he could not have supported Hale. The essential questions were whether slavery was going to be allowed in the territories and whether the aggressions of the Slave Power were going to be resisted. He added, "The truth is we Liberty men have got some isms that are too refined for use. They are like the Whig Anti-Slavery resolutions: better adapted for show than use." There was no point, Stanton maintained, in advocating a program that had no hope of attainment. Stanton wrote: "Lewis Tappan puts forth an address counselling us to stand firm etc. He and his co-signers live in a city of half a million of people. They give half a hundred votes. Such men are not practical except on paper."[1] Nevertheless, Stanton affirmed his intention of going to the Buffalo Convention a Hale man, a promise which, it seems, he had very little intention of keeping.[2]

---

[1] James Birney to Lewis Tappan, July 10, 1848, Dwight L. Dumond (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (New York: Appleton Century Company, 1938), II, 1108-1109; James Birney to The Emancipator [Boston], July 26, 1848, p. 2.

[2] Gamaliel Bailey, "Union," National Era [Washington, D. C.], August 3, 1848, p. 122.

[3] John G. Whittier, "Union," National Era [Washington, D. C.], August 3, 1848, p. 123.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, July 31, 1848, John Albree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence From the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), pp. 102-104.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, July 31, 1848, ibid.

Stanton went to the Buffalo convention fully cognizant that the major concern of most of the Liberty men was not the candidate to be selected but the platform. The problem was that not many Liberty leaders thought that Van Buren would run on a platform which was suitable to them. Whittier told the readers of the National Era that if the Liberty men could secure a resolution stating that Congress could not protect or legalize slavery anywhere in the national domain or in any territory or district under its jurisdiction, and if the candidate accepted the platform, then they would have no reason not to support the coalition movement.[1] Even Lewis Tappan admitted that in such an eventuality, the Liberty men would have to consider supporting such a movement.[2] John P. Hale, for his part, was quite willing to surrender the Liberty nomination that he had reluctantly accepted. He expressed to Lewis Tappan his wish that circumstances would allow him to withdraw and suggested that he might draw up a letter relinquishing his nomination to be used at the discretion of some of his friends at Buffalo.[3] Tappan, however, cautioned against such a move. "A letter might be used injudiciously under excitement--even by your best friends," he told Hale.[1] Tappan persuaded Samuel Lewis, the Ohio Liberty man, to write a letter to Hale expressing the same view.[2] Despite the advice to the contrary, Hale gave to Stanton, Lewis, Amos Tuck and Joshua Leavitt the responsibility for deciding whether his name should be withdrawn from the Liberty nomination.[3]

---

[1] John G. Whittier, "Union," National Era [Washington, D. C.], August 3, 1848, p. 123.

[2] Lewis Tappan to John P. Hale, July 8, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] John P. Hale to Lewis Tappan, July 6, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

On August 9, 1848, Barnburner Democrats, Conscience Whigs, disgruntled Clay Whigs, Liberty Party men, land reformers, workingmen, and advocates of cheap postage from eighteen states and the District of Columbia, came together in an atmosphere of enthusiasm and excitement at Buffalo.[4] Because of the large attendance a tent was set up in the park for the delegates while a Committee of Conference, the membership of which was equally divided among the Whigs, Democrats and Liberty men, sat behind closed doors in a small church. The members of this committee were to consider the main questions and refer their decision to the mass convention for ratification.[5]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to John P. Hale, July 8, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[2] Samuel Lewis to John P. Hale, July 10, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, July 31, 1848, John Albree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence From the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), pp. 102-104.

[4] George W. Julian, Political Recollections, 1840-1872 (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg and Company, 1884), pp. 56-57.

[5] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son, ed. Richard H. Dana, 3rd (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), pp. 149-153.

The mass convention assembled on the morning of the ninth of August and listened to several warm-up speeches. After a Mr. Husbands of Rochester had spoken, a cry went up for Stanton and he came forward amid loud cheering to announce that the convention would be organized at noon. As he was about to sit down there was such an outcry for the gifted orator to say something that he consented to make a short speech. He told his audience that the central purpose of the convention was to take issue with the South on slavery extension. Since unity was necessary to halt the Slave Power, Stanton said, he was ready to go with anybody in favor of the Free Soil movement and against anyone opposed to it.[1]

There was no doubt that Stanton and the Liberty men who thought like him would accept the nomination of Van Buren if the ex-President received the support of a majority of the delegates and would accept a sound platform. The absence of doubt was, in itself, a boost for the forces supporting Van Buren. While the convention was getting under way the Liberty leaders caucused and agreed that if the platform was acceptable to them, and Van Buren would accept it and put his name unconditionally before the convention, they would relinquish Hale's Liberty nomination, as they had permission to do, and place Hale's name before the Free Soil Convention.[1]

---

[1] Oliver Dyer, Phonographic Report of the Proceedings of the National Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York, August 9th and 10th, 1848 (Buffalo: G. H. Derby and Company), pp. 3-5; and National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 7, 1848, p. 142.

Eighteen states and the District of Columbia were represented at Buffalo. Each sent six delegates, two from each party, to the Conference Committee which met at the Universalist Church on Washington Street. Stanton served on this committee, which was chaired by Salmon P. Chase. The committee resolved to decide upon a platform before the nomination was made. Equal representation was given to the three parties on the Platform Committee. Stanton served on this committee, too, and with Chase, Benjamin Butler and others, assisted in writing the resolutions. The platform was then submitted to the Conference Committee, amended and approved by it and then accepted by the mass convention.[2] The resolutions placed the new Free Democratic Party "upon the NATIONAL PLATFORM OF FREEDOM, in opposition to the Sectional Platform of Slavery." It asserted that there must be no further compromises with slavery and vowed to rescue the federal government from the control of the Slave Power. While eschewing interference with slavery in the states, it declared that "Congress has no more power to make a SLAVE than to make a KING," and must therefore relieve itself of all responsibility for slavery wherever it has power to legislate on that subject. The platform demanded freedom in Oregon, New Mexico and California. It said: "Let the soil of our extensive domains be kept free, for the hardy pioneers of our own land, and the oppressed and banished of other lands seeking homes of comfort and fields of enterprise in the New World."[1] The writers of the platform, in order to please all of the factions represented at Buffalo, inserted planks calling for cheap postage, river and harbor improvements, free homesteads, economy in government, and a tariff for revenue only.[2] Stanton was completely satisfied with the platform, believing that the Liberty men had gotten all they could have hoped for.[3]

---

[1] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, August 22, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[2] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son, ed. Richard H. Dana, 3rd (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 153; Oliver Dyer, Phonographic Report of the Proceedings of the National Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York, August 9th and 10th, 1848 (Buffalo: G. H. Derby and Company), pp. 12, 28; and Daily Republic [Buffalo], August 10, 1848, clipping in Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress.

When the Conference Committee met to consider the nomination of candidates, Salmon P. Chase rose to withdraw the name of Judge John McLean, his fellow Ohioan, who was unwilling to resign from the Supreme Court.[4] Benjamin Butler then made a two and one half hour eulogy of Van Buren. When brought back from his digression in Van Buren's turnip patch, Butler announced that Van Buren as President would sign a bill to outlaw slavery in the District of Columbia, if Congress would pass one. This removed the main objection that the Liberty men had to the candidacy of the ex-President. Butler then read a letter from Van Buren in which he gave the delegates permission to drop his Utica nomination and place him unreservedly before the convention. When Butler finished his speech, Stanton, who had been chosen for the assignment by the Liberty leaders because he had Hale's letter in his possession, announced that, because the platform was acceptable, Hale was willing to relinquish his Liberty nomination and to serve the Free Democracy in any capacity which they might designate.[1] Before he could finish his intended remarks, the call for the roll sounded and he relinquished the floor.[2]

---

[1] Kirk H. Porter and Donald B. Johnson (comp.), National Party Platforms, 1840-1956 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), pp. 13-14.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[4] Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son, ed. Richard H. Dana, 3rd (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 154; Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 102.

The informal ballot revealed Van Buren's strength. All of the Barnburners and a majority of Whigs joined with Stanton and two or three other Liberty men to give the New Yorker 244 votes. Hale's 183 votes came almost completely from Liberty men, while thirty-nine votes were scattered among other candidates.[1]

---

[1] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, August 22, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 102; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 164; Charles Francis Adams, Richard Henry Dana (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), I, 139.

[2] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition, p. 102.

Stanton gave his vote to Van Buren, he later explained to Hale, because he considered him to be the only candidate who could carry a single state and "was the best man to knock in pieces the main prop of slavery, the Northern Democratic party." To Stanton there was little doubt that Van Buren was going to be the nominee and he thought that he should have a good majority on the first trial.[2]

The Liberty men had made an agreement with the Barnburners to reconcile their friends to Van Buren's candidacy if he were chosen and to "make it harmonious and unanimous if possible" in return for the "thoroughly Liberty platform."[3] After the informal ballot, Stanton, Leavitt, Samuel Lewis and Caleb Swan and other Liberty men selected Leavitt to make the motion fulfilling the agreement. Leavitt rose and made his way to the platform. He told the confrerees that he felt that he was in the presence of the Divine Spirit. In an eloquent twenty minute speech he traced the history of the Liberty Party and explained that the time had come to deliver up this organization. He exclaimed, "The Liberty Party is not dead but translated," and called for the unanimous nomination of Van Buren. Samuel Lewis seconded the motion and asked for the full support of Hale's backers.[1] The motion was carried and the committee turned to the nomination of a Vice President. The Whigs claimed that office since the Liberty men had received the platform and the Barnburners the Presidential candidate. The Ohio delegation caucused and found themselves unanimously in favor of the New Englander, Charles Francis Adams. They withdrew the name of Joshua Giddings and the son of "Old Man Eloquent" was nominated by acclamation. The ticket of Van Buren and Adams was referred to the mass convention, which received it with enthusiasm, approved it and then adjourned.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; Oliver Dyer, Phonographic Report of the Proceedings of the National Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York, August 9th and 10th, 1848 (Buffalo: G. H. Derby and Company), p. 132; Richard Henry Dana, Jr., Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son, ed. Richard H. Dana, 3rd (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1910), p. 158; Charles Francis Adams, Richard Henry Dana (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), I, 139.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] Ibid.

---

[1] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, August 22, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society; George W. Julian, *Political Recollections, 1840-1872* (Chicago: Jansen, McClurg and Company, 1884), p. 61; Richard Henry Dana, Jr., *Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son*, ed. Richard H. Dana, 3rd (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), pp. 158-159; Oliver Dyer, *Phonographic Report of the Proceedings of the National Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York, August 9th and 10th, 1848* (Buffalo, G. H. Derby and Company), pp. 28, 32.

[2] Richard H. Dana, Jr., *Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son*, pp. 159-161; Oliver Dyer, *Free Soil Convention, 1848*, p. 28. Stanton told Hale that he had made a short speech favoring Hale for second place on the ticket, Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society. No mention of this is made in other sources.

Stanton's vote for Van Buren on the informal ballot shocked Lewis Tappan. He accused Stanton of perfidy to Hale and to those Liberty men to whom he had promised that he would campaign for Hale. Moreover, according to Tappan, Stanton had not had authority to withdraw Hale from the Liberty nomination. Tappan was convinced that Hale thought he had been poorly treated by his friends at the Free Soil Convention.[1] Tappan seemed to have ignored the fact that the Liberty men at Buffalo had been given permission by Hale himself to withdraw his name from the Liberty nomination and that the Liberty leaders, not Stanton alone, made the decision to do this. Moreover, Hale was apparently not disappointed with the outcome of the convention. He had all along been a reluctant candidate and had given very little encouragement to the Liberty men to advance his nomination on the Free Soil ticket. Hale had accepted the Liberty nomination to avoid being a Free Soil candidate and to smooth the way for the merging of the Liberty Party in a more inclusive anti-slavery movement. Stanton and Leavitt did not act counter to his wishes.[2] Tappan was entirely aware of Hale's reluctance to be a candidate. When he had heard that Van Buren had been nominated, he had written to Hale, "If the convention has adopted right principles, and Mr. Van Buren agrees to them you will be glad to escape."[1]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to Henry B. Stanton, September 28, 1848, Tappan Papers, Library of Congress; Lewis Tappan to John G. Whittier, August 22, 1848, John Albree (ed.), Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892 (Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911), pp. 108-109.

[2] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 96-104.

Tappan's charge that Stanton violated his pledge to work for Hale at the Buffalo Convention may have merit, although how soon after Stanton's arrival and how intensively he campaigned for Van Buren is not known.[2] Had Hale been at Stanton's side throughout the proceedings he might have approved of all of Stanton's actions. Certainly Stanton did not act like a guilty man when he wrote to Hale to explain his course at the convention.[3] Leavitt too expressed his conviction that he had acted according to Hale's wishes in giving up the Liberty nomination and in nominating Van Buren by acclamation after the informal ballot.[1]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to John P. Hale, August 11, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[2] Tappan refers to "some influential person" at Buffalo who informed Hale that Stanton had electioneered for Van Buren from the moment he arrived. A letter to Hale to which Tappan may have been referring is in Hale's papers but the signature has been removed. The writer asserts that Stanton and his Liberty friend Frederick P. Tracy worked to secure support from the Liberty men for Van Buren. This writer stated that Stanton and Tracy had informed him that Benjamin Butler would not have allowed Van Buren's name to come before the convention if several Liberty men had not indicated their intention to support him. The unknown writer also said that Tracy told him that Stanton had been promised a reward by the Barnburners for his pro-Van Buren activities, and that Stanton had bragged that, were it not for his and Tracy's efforts, Hale would have been nominated. This writer also told Hale that Leavitt had urged him to tell all of this and to use Leavitt's name. Unknown to Hale, August 19, 1848, Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society. Considering Leavitt's defense of Stanton, in Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, August 22, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society, this seems highly improbable and casts doubt on the authenticity of the information given in the letter.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

Stanton assumed that Hale would naturally support the Free Democratic ticket and campaign for Van Buren.[2] He was correct. On August 28, Hale wrote a letter to Samuel Lewis in which he officially withdrew his Liberty Party candidacy and urged "a hearty and energetic support" for the Free Soil nominees.[3] Hale proceeded to campaign diligently for the candidates of the new party.[4]

On September 13, Stanton attended the Liberty Convention which met in Utica to dissolve the New York State Liberty Party. All but three of the Liberty men present voted to support Van Buren and the Buffalo platform. From their meeting place the former Liberty men walked to the courthouse to join with the Barnburners. Stanton addressed the joint meeting which nominated John A. Dix, a former Democrat, for Governor and Seth Gates, a former Whig, for Lieutenant Governor. Stanton was chosen an elector for Seneca County.[5] Stanton was assigned to campaign for the Free Democracy in western New York and he performed his duties with his customary energy and no little success.[1] Nearly all of the counties in that region gave Van Buren a larger vote than they gave Cass. Preston King, the Barnburner running from Silas Wright's home county, St. Lawrence, was sent to Washington as a Free Democratic congressman. Forty-nine Free Democrats were sent to the state legislature and only nineteen regular Democrats. The Democratic Party in New York was a shambles.[2]

---

[1] Joshua Leavitt to John P. Hale, August 22, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

[3] John P. Hale to Samuel Lewis, August 28, 1848, National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 7, 1848, p. 142.

[4] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 104.

[5] National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 21, 1848, p. 150.

Van Buren received about ten per cent of the total national vote. New York's thirty-six electoral votes provided Zachary Taylor with his margin of victory over Cass. The election proved that the slavery question was in politics to stay and that an issue of such magnitude could dissolve major party loyalties. The Democratic Party was made aware that southern dictation would not be accepted by a large section of the party. Stanton's belief that the Free Democratic movement would "knock in pieces the main prop of slavery, the Northern Democratic party"[3] appeared to be proved correct. Stanton saw as the next task the reconstruction of that party, with the help of anti-slavery former Whigs, as an anti-slavery organization.

---

[1] National Era [Washington, D. C.], October 26, 1848, p. 171.

[2] National Era [Washington, D. C.], November 23, 1848, p. 187.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to John P. Hale, August 20, 1848, John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society.

CHAPTER XI

STANTON AS A DEMOCRAT

Convinced at last that third party activity was effectual only in a short-term basis, and that the Democratic Party could be turned into an anti-slavery vehicle, Stanton determined, in 1849, to work within that party.

The Free Democratic Party had succeeded in sending nine of its number to Congress and had gained the balance of power in the legislature of Ohio. In February of 1849, a coalition of Democrats, Free Soilers and Independents sent Stanton's friend and anti-slavery comrade, Salmon P. Chase, to the United States Senate. Stanton was elated with Chase's success and the progress of the party generally. If Free Soil men acted properly, he reasoned, they could carry the country in 1852. They would not, he was convinced, succeed as a third party. He told Chase, "We must be the democratic party of the country--not a third party--but one of the leading parties." The Democratic Party of New York could be captured, Stanton believed, through the Barnburners, men of good faith who were truly radical on the slavery question. The mass of the party would assume the ground of the Barnburners and "their creed will be the standard of democracy." Even the Free Soil Whigs, Stanton observed, were coming to this position. Those Whigs, and Democratic Hunkers who failed to rally behind the Free Democrats would be left behind.[1]

Stanton made no distinction between the New York Democrats and the national party. As the New York party goes, so goes the nation, he reasoned. Ohio, Vermont and Wisconsin were already showing the way and a coalition in Massachusetts was likely. The opportunity was there, it needed only to be seized. If the Democrats, the party that had controlled the nation seven-eighths of the time in the past and probably would rule in the same proportion in the future, could be brought to the right position, Stanton advised, "no long-sighted man will quarrel about words and terms" in the name of the party or in the proclamation of its principles and policies. "If we can save the country by abandoning a cherished party name," Stanton argued, "or giving up a set form of speech, or by throwing to the theoreticians some worn out catch-words or by casting into the shadows of the past some old trivial issues, common sense and patriotism demand that we make the sacrifice."[2] The Democrats had learned from the election of 1848, he believed, that the mass of its supporters could not be taken for granted. They were in a teachable frame of mind and should not be taught too severely nor too harshly at first, Stanton advised. "In due time they will read a lecture to the South compared with which the admonitions of Cotton-whiggery will be but gentle cooings of a sucking dove." To win over the Hunkers of the New York party, the Barnburners had no need to compromise on principles, nor, on the other hand to give needless offense to the rival faction. For his part, Stanton was willing to go as far as he could without sacrificing truth to accommodate "the scruples, the prejudices, and even the pride of the Cass men. . . ."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, February 24, 1849, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] "Western New York," to Boston Daily Republican, July 31, 1849, p. 2; identified as Stanton's letter in Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, August 2, 1849, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

Attempts to Reform the Democratic Party

The test was to occur at Rome, New York, where separate conventions of Barnburners and Hunkers were to be held in August, 1849. Stanton was convinced that the Barnburners would stand firm and yield no principle. "They would be fools as well as recreants to yield now," he told Sumner.[2] What the Hunkers would do was not so predictable. The mass of Cass men, Stanton thought, were for party unity on Free Soil principles, but their leaders were holding to the popular sovereignty doctrine. The worst that could happen, Stanton thought, would be that the two factions would not unite.[3]

At the Barnburner convention in Rome, Stanton introduced a resolution to adhere to the Wilmot Proviso. This was accepted. The Hunkers, led by William Marcy, were unwilling to accept this and the attempt at union failed.[1] Stanton was sorry that union was not effected but was pleased that the Barnburners had proved their mettle and shown themselves deserving of his trust. King, Loomis, Van Buren, Nye and the others of the radical wing, Stanton told Gerrit Smith, would soon be within hailing distance of Smith.[2] With the Barnburners steadfast, all that had to be done was to win over a portion of the Hunkers and the Free Democratic Party was reborn in the Democratic Party![3]

---

[1] "Western New York," [Henry B. Stanton] to Boston Daily Republican, July 31, 1849, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, August 2, 1849, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[3] "Western New York," [Henry B. Stanton] to Boston Daily Republican, July 31, 1849, p. 2.

When the Hunkers met in Syracuse on September 6, they were in a conciliatory mood. They adopted a resolution that the Democratic committee should impose no test upon candidates which was inconsistent with the Free Soil resolutions adopted by the convention at Rome. They nominated a full ticket of state officers but provided for the withdrawal of four candidates, if the Barnburners, who were to meet in Utica on September 12, would accept the four Hunker candidates and make nominations of which the Hunkers could approve. The Barnburners acquiesced and a frail alliance was effected.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 165; and Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), p. 114.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 3, 1849, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Samuel D. Porter, August 20, 1849, Samuel D. Porter Papers, University of Rochester; and Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 3, 1849, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Stanton believed that a refusal to accept the Hunker offer would have damaged the cause. He thought that three-quarters of the Hunkers agreed with the Barnburners on the slavery question and that within six months the entire New York Democracy would be in the forefront of the Free Soil movement. Stanton reasoned that fusion "was worth an effort, and even a risk of anything but principle to put ourselves in an attitude where we could put New York right before the country."[2] To Stanton the union achieved at Utica was morally right.[3]

Stanton's belief that the Democracy was on its way to becoming a great anti-slavery party was not shared by all of his anti-slavery friends. Charles Sumner thought that the Free Soilers in New York might have fallen into a trap. Although he had high regard for New York Democrats like John Van Buren, David Dudley Field and John Bigelow and thought that they were sincerely determined to hold fast to anti-slavery principles, yet they were politicians, he told Chase, and would do what politicians do. The Free Soilers, Sumner thought, should have remained aloof and drawn adherents from the major parties.[1] Some of the Free Soil presses agreed with Sumner in 1849, that the unity movement was a mistake. Stanton was miffed and charged that the editors were still basically Whigs.[2] He sarcastically suggested to Sumner that the coalition which had been formed by Free Soilers and Democrats in Massachusetts was not very different from the union in New York, except that the New Yorkers came close to agreeing on principle, while the Bay Staters didn't try.[3] Time would show that Sumner was correct. Stanton's faulty premise was that the Barnburners would not yield on principle to maintain unity.

---

[1] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), p. 115; and National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 20, 1849, p. 150.

[2] Unsigned letter, September 21, 1849, National Era [Washington, D. C.], October 4, 1849, p. 158. This letter, the Era explained, was from an "old and influential Liberty man" who was present at the Utica convention. It was sent from Seneca Falls and is believed to be by Stanton.

[3] National Era [Washington, D. C.], October 25, 1849, p. 170.

State Senator

The Barnburners and Liberty men of Seneca, Tompkins and Yates Counties selected Henry B. Stanton to be their candidate for State Senator in 1849. The Hunkers put no candidate into the field, so Stanton had only to contend with the Whigs, who, in an attempt to put down the powerful combination against them, sent United States Senator

---

[1] Charles Sumner to Salmon P. Chase, September 18, 1849, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Reflecting upon the unity movement two years later, Sumner thought it had been a grevious mistake. Had it not occurred, a new order would have resulted and "the beginning of the end would have been at hand." Charles Sumner to John Bigelow, October 24, 1851, John Bigelow, Retrospections of an Active Life (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1909-1913), I, 120; and Charles Sumner to John Bigelow, March 2, 1852, ibid., p. 125.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, October 1, 1849, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, November 8, 1849, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

William H. Seward into the district to campaign against Stanton. Seward's activities irked Stanton who complained to Gerrit Smith that "Sewardism played its blackest and dirtiest cards." Despite the activities of the powerful Whig leader, whom Stanton called "the most unscrupulous and malignant demagogue in the State,"[1] Stanton was elected by a comfortable majority.[2] The Democratic Party of New York elected about one-half of their state ticket. They had control of the Assembly from the previous election, but won two less seats than the Whigs in the Senate. Stanton was happy to note that the majority of Democrats in the legislature were from the Barnburner faction.[3]

The appearance of Stanton in Democratic armor was shocking to some. Horace Greeley's Whig New York Daily Tribune expressed its incomprehension of what abolitionists like Joshua Leavitt and Henry B. Stanton had in common with Hunkers like William Marcy, who, as Governor, had once attempted to put down abolitionists meetings by law.[4] Lewis

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 15, 1849, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; and Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, November 8, 1849, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[2] Stanton's majority was put at 800 by the National Era [Washington, D. C.], November 5, 1849, p. 182. Henry B. Stanton told a friend that he had won by about 700 votes, Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[4] New York Daily Tribune, November 9, 1849, p. 2.

Tappan, who disliked politics and had become a Liberty man with reluctance, was aghast. His opinion was reminiscent of Garrison's a decade before. "Stanton has, I think," Tappan told Julius LeMoyne, "been ruined by ambition, desire of office and applause."[1]

When the State Senate met in January of 1850, Stanton was appointed to a special committee to draft anti-slavery resolutions. The Geddes resolutions presented by the committee declared opposition to the extension of slavery and favored the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia and the admission of California as a free state. Stanton believed that these resolutions did not go far enough and wrote a substitute resolution calling for the federal government to remove itself from all responsibility for the existence of slavery or the slave trade where it had the power to do so. Stanton's substitute resolution, introduced by his colleague, Senator Stone, was passed by the Senate. Amendments, nearly identical to the Geddes resolutions, were then approved. Through this maneuver the Democrats were allowed to claim responsibility for the introduction of the anti-slavery propositions.[2]

---

[1] Lewis Tappan to Dr. F. Julius LeMoyne, December 26, 1849, Journal of Negro History, XVIII (1933), 457.

[2] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Third Session (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1850), pp. 79-85. Stanton is identified as the author of the Stone resolution in Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 27, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress and Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 166-167.

When, however, a motion to instruct the New York members of Congress to vote against the extension of slavery was introduced, Stanton moved to lay it on the table.[1] Stanton later explained to Chase that he had for ten years refused to lift a finger to obtain any legislative expressions about slavery, since they had become a matter of course and had "ceased to have the slightest influence upon Congress or the people." Letters from leading constituents, he thought, had much more influence on legislators, while resolutions were merely used for political purposes and state consumption.[2] After his tabling motion had been defeated, Stanton voted for the motion, which carried[3] and allowed the legislature, as Stanton phrased it, "to take another turn in the grand round of hypocrisy. . . ."[4]

Stanton's explanation to Chase is unconvincing. More meaningful was Stanton's reminder to the Secretary of State, William Marcy, in 1853. Stanton recalled to Marcy that "during the years 1850 and 1851, I did as much as any Barnburner to disembarrass the party in this state on the slavery question." In trying to bring the two factions of the state party together, Stanton explained, he earned "a good deal of obloquy from extreme men on both sides. . . ."[1]

---

[1] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Third Session (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1850), p. 83.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 27, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Third Session, p. 84.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 27, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Horace Greeley thought that Stanton's tabling motion was evidence that the former Free Soilers who worked with the Democrats had sold out the anti-slavery cause.[2] The same evidence suggested to Maria Weston Chapman, the venemous Garrisonian, that Stanton was morally dead. What a falling off, she thought, for the man who "up to the time he had refused to cooperate with Garrison" had made it his life's business to address legislatures urging the passage of such resolutions.[3]

Although the conclusions of Greeley and Mrs. Chapman stemmed from their Whig and Garrisonian views respectively, Stanton's actions certainly indicated that something was amiss. Stanton responded to Greeley's attack and that of Thurlow Weed in characteristic fashion. "I regard Greely and Weed," Stanton wrote to Chase, "as two of the most unscrupulous demagogues and liars in the Union."[4]

Attacks on Stanton only encouraged him to pursue his course with increased fervor. This, at least, had not changed since abolition days, although his associations and his loyalties had. Stanton was, for better or worse, a Democrat and he intended to serve his party with the singleness of purpose, which, when he was an abolitionist orator, was called fanaticism. One of the best means to serve the Democratic Party, the nation and the slave, was by working from within to change that party, Stanton reasoned.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] New York Daily Tribune, January 18, 1850, p. 2.

[3] Maria Weston Chapman to "Nine Women of Glasgow," June 8, 1850, Weston Papers, Boston Public Library.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 27, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

A test of Stanton's devotion to the Democracy came with the compromise measures which were introduced in the United States Senate by Henry Clay early in 1850. The effort to quiet sectional antagonisms arising from the territorial accessions resulting from the Mexican War took the form of bills designed to admit California as a free state, organize the remainder of the Mexican Cession without any reference to slavery, prohibit the slave trade in the District of Columbia and provide for effective means to secure the return of fugitive slaves. The provisions of the so-called Compromise of 1850 which dealt with New Mexico and the fugitive slaves no doubt rankled Stanton, contravening principles which he had for years enunciated. Designed to save the Union they threatened to break both major parties into pro-slavery and anti-slavery wings. While the struggle over compromise was raging in Washington, Stanton was called upon at a Troy dinner to respond to a sentiment in favor of the American Union. Calling himself one of the most radical of the Constitutional abolitionists, he told the dinner guests:

> So firm is my belief in the necessity of the existence of the Union of these states to secure the rights of the twenty millions of freemen within its borders and to work out the ultimate peaceful emancipation of the three millions of slaves south of the Potomac, and to promote the cause of

> civil and religious liberty throughout the world, that I am ready to say now what I have always said, come Wilmot Proviso or no Wilmot Proviso, come slavery prohibition or slavery extension, I will go with anybody who is for, and will oppose everybody who is against, "One Country, one Constitution, one Destiny."[1]

In short, Stanton favored the preservation of the Union, as did the great majority of anti-slavery men. What was significant in his Troy toast was not what he said, but what he failed to say. Stanton chose to express his opposition to Clay's omnibus bill behind the scenes rather than to make a strong public statement. The way to handle the slavery issue, Stanton still believed, was by raising anti-slavery Democrats to positions of power. Since ultra conservative Daniel Dickinson's term as United States Senator from New York was drawing to a close, Stanton set as his first objective the selection of a radical Democrat to replace him. To secure the nomination of anti-slavery Democrats for Congressional seats, Stanton was willing to allow some Hunkers to receive nominations for state offices.[2] The united Democracy of New York assembled in Syracuse on September 11, 1850 to nominate candidates for the fall election. Fernando Wood, an anti-Wilmot Proviso Democrat, had arranged the fusion support of Horatio Seymour for governor. Stanton, an observer rather than a delegate at Syracuse, had lent his support to the Seymour movement in the interests of party unity. He was convinced that Seymour was opposed to the re-election of Dickinson, the recently enacted Fugitive Slave Law and the extension of slavery. He regarded Sanford Church, Seymour's running mate as a "capital fellow."[1]

---

[1] From Albany Argus, reprinted in The Emancipator and Republican [Boston], March 7, 1850, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, April 22, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

The Barnburners, when they arrived at Syracuse, found to their surprise that the Hunkers were in the majority. The ultra Hunkers tried to take advantage of the situation by making a test question of returning Daniel Dickinson to the Senate. The Barnburners mobilized their forces and defeated this endeavor, but, Stanton reported, their strength and skill were used up and they could not secure a good platform expression on the slavery question.[2] Stanton's reference to the platform was an understatement. The convention refused to recommend a modification of the Fugitive Slave Law. It expressed its complete satisfaction with the Compromise of 1850 and congratulated the country on having settled a question which had threatened to divide the people.[3] Stanton was distressed by the platform, the loss of which he blamed on the laziness of the Barnburners.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California; Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 23, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 23, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Herbert A. Donovan, The Barnburners (New York: New York University Press, 1925), p. 115; Salmon P. Chase to Benjamin Butler, n.d. (1852), scratch copy, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

The trap which Sumner had predicted had been sprung. Stanton surveyed the situation and concluded that he had no choice but to remain with the Democrats and continue his efforts to bring that party to radical ground on the slavery question. The Liberty Party was "utterly dissolved," he told Chase. All that remained in that area was Gerrit Smithism which was too transcendental and powerless to waste his time on. As for the Whigs, neither the Fillmore wing nor the Sewardites were worthy of confidence. "The one is stolid and aristocratic--the other hypocritical and proscriptive. Let them go to perdition together."[2] Stanton could not forgive the Sewardites for the "contumely and calumny" that they had poured upon the Liberty men and the Free Democracy, and, he might have added, upon himself personally. The Democrats, he maintained, were sound on the general questions of national and state policy--issues that he had once considered of minor consequence. They were, he opined, as sound as the Whigs on the slavery question "(so far as any of that issue remains on the calendar)."[3] Stanton's parenthetical comment suggests that he too had come to regard the Compromise of 1850 as a finality on the slavery question!

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 23, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Ibid.

Stanton told Chase that he believed that he could do more good by attempting to impress his principles upon the Democrats than he could by any other mode of action.[1] What could be salvaged? Stanton and his allies set to work after the Syracuse Convention to secure Barnburner nominations for the Assembly and for Congress. In that way, Dickinson was certain to be defeated. If the Democrats captured the Assembly, the Barnburners could name the Senator; if the Whigs won the lower house, they would send someone from their ranks to Washington.[2]

In New York the Whigs were badly divided but the administration forces got together with their antagonists, the Seward anti-Compromise men, in support of Washington Hunt for Governor. Despite defections on election day, Hunt was narrowly elected over Seymour and the Whigs captured the Assembly. Stanton, who had labored industriously for the Democrats, and Barnburner candidates in particular,[3] was not very dismayed. The Democrats elected most of their state ticket and won half of the state's seats in the House of Representatives. Most important to Stanton was the fact that three-fourths of the Democratic Assemblymen and a large percentage of Democratic Congressmen were Barnburners. With the help of Sewardite Whigs, Stanton thought, they would be able to take a strong stand against the Slave Power.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 23, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Henry S. Randall, November 11, 1850, Henry S. Randall Papers, New York Historical Society; and Henry B. Stanton to Jabez D. Hammond, November 11, 1850, Simon Gratz Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

The situation in Massachusetts for the anti-Compromise people was even better than it was in New York. In the Bay State, a coalition of Democrats and Free Soilers had secured twice as many Massachusetts Senate seats as the Whigs and was preparing to send a Free Soiler to the United States Senate to succeed Daniel Webster, who was serving as Fillmore's Secretary of State. Webster, who had recommended the purging of anti-Compromise men from the Whig party, had become involved in a bitter debate in the press with Horace Mann over the Compromise measures and had attempted to crush Mann. The former Secretary of the Massachusetts school board, however, was re-elected to Congress. "The whole result in Massachusetts has killed Webster dead, dead," Henry Stanton rejoiced.[2]

In Michigan, the home state of Lewis Cass, the Democratic candidate of 1848 and a strong Compromise man, the Democratic Party received a sound thrashing. All of these omens convinced Stanton that by 1852 both major parties would have broken up over the slavery question and a re-alignment of forces set in motion.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[2] _Ibid_.

Despite his anticipation of drastic political re-organization, Stanton had no intention of prematurely severing his connection with the Democracy. He would have nothing to do with abortive movements. Only a genuine mass-based anti-slavery party would secure his support. He would continue the "bore from within" tactic until a change in the political climate made that policy inexpedient. In December of 1850, a New York City Democrat, Frederick Conklin, tried to mobilize support for the formation of a new party which would unite the anti-slavery forces of both major parties. The idea did not catch on at that time. The day for a new party had not yet arrived, but it was drawing near.[2]

When Stanton returned to Albany for the second session of the legislature, the election of a United States Senator to replace Dickinson was one of the first major issues demanding attention. Since the Whigs controlled both houses, it seemed that no Democrat could be selected. The Democrats hoped that the Whigs could not unite in support of a candidate. If such was the case Stanton thought that after the next state election the Democrats might unite behind John A. Dix. Dix had been the Free Democratic gubernatorial candidate in 1848 but Stanton's enthusiasm for the man is difficult to understand. Dix was an avowed white supremist, whose advocacy of Free Soil doctrines was based on a desire to keep slavery from depressing the state of free white labor. He had opposed the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, even though the platform upon which he was running had advocated the extinction of slavery in the nation's capital.[1] Affairs were so out of joint that racists were mistaken for radicals.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[2] John Bigelow, Diary, December 18, 1850, p. 199, John Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library; and Salmon P. Chase to Belle Chase, December 25, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

The Democratic plan to postpone the nomination showed promise of success when one Senate Whig refused to vote for Hamilton Fish, the Whig nominee. The Senate was divided 16-16. On February 10, 1851, in the midst of the crisis in Albany, Elizabeth Cady Stanton gave birth to her fourth son, Theodore Weld Stanton. The tiny lad had a displaced collar bone that alarmed Elizabeth and caused her to write a letter to her husband which portrayed the situation in a very serious light. Stanton's first impulse was to return home immediately. If he did this, Fish would be immediately elected, and he, as a Democratic leader, would "be denounced from one end of the state to the other," he told his wife. He promised to return, if needed, but referred Elizabeth to a surgeon and the defect in young Theodore was corrected.[2] Nevertheless, some Democrats did absent themselves from the Senate chamber and Fish was elected.[1]

---

[1] Eric Foner, "Racial Attitudes of the New York Free Soilers," New York History, XLVI (1965), 316.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, February 20, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton as Jacksonian Democrat

Stanton's disillusionment with the Whig party had been nurtured in the mob era of the 1830's when "gentlemen of property and standing" had led the assaults upon abolitionist meetings. He abhorred the alliance of the Cotton Whigs with the plantation owners. He detested the compromises that he believed even the soundest anti-slavery Whigs had made with their consciences, and had concluded that the Whigs could produce nothing good. The Democrats had, he believed, shown promise. With this view, he threw himself unsparingly into the cause of the Democracy, immersed himself in its dogma and devoted his forensic skills to its service. What emerged was a Jacksonian rhetorician.

"You have long been ruled by a clique," he wrote to the people of Massachusetts, "whose body is found in the saloons of Beacon-street, and its heart in the money vaults of State-street." To save the people from "hide-bound conservatism" was the object of the Democratic Party. Massachusetts is in "slavery to monetary and corporation monopoly," and is chained to "the faithless and proscriptive administration of the federal government." The Democracy stood for the rule of the "real producers," the farmers and makers of products.[1]

---

[1] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), p. 323; and John Bigelow, Diary, March 30, 1851, p. 208, John Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library.

Stanton's Jacksonian sentiments were clearly evident in his actions at the second session of the legislature which opened in January of 1851. The Whig Governor, Washington Hunt, had, in his message to the legislature, recommended an amendment of the state Constitution to allow the government to borrow on the credit of the state seven or eight million dollars for the enlargement of the Erie Canal. The future surplus revenues of the canal were to be used to repay the loan. Stanton was selected by the Democrats to reply to the speech. His effort was so impressive that the speech was printed in full in the Democratic Review.[2] This was only the second such speech to gain that distinction in twelve years.[3]

Stanton's attack upon the Whig canal policies was built upon the basic tenets of the Jacksonian faith. Whereas Governor Hunt had directed his remarks "to the present condition and future welfare of the State, rather than to past events which belong to the province of the historian,"[4] Stanton focused on the errors of the past. By violating the sound principles of political economy and departing from the old and revered values and methods, Stanton proclaimed, the Whigs had brought humiliation, disgrace, extravagances and embarrassments upon the state. The Whig policies had been based on the Ruggles Report of 1838, which Stanton called "one of the wildest speculations of an age prolific in chimeras and visions."[1] They had brought the great state of New York to "its knees before the bill brokers and money changers of Wall-street."[2]

---

[1] "Western New York," [Henry B. Stanton] to Boston Daily Republican, July 31, 1849, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "New York Finances," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, New Series, XVIII (March, 1851), 270-281.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, March 6, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] State of New York, Messages from the Governors (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, State Printers, 1909), IV, 543-544.

The Whigs in the 1830's, Stanton charged, had staked the future on a policy of risk and gamble and brought the state to grief. Hunt's program, if enacted, would repeat the error. The Democrats, Stanton affirmed, favored improvement and expansion of the canal to keep pace with the increasing demands of business. Increased business would increase revenues which would be used to enlarge the canal. The Stop and Pay policy, the cautious approach of the Democracy, involved no risk of diminished revenues, of the obsolescence of the canals resulting from the emergence of the railroads, and above all it created no burdensome debt. Stanton quoted Jefferson and Gallatin on the perniciousness of the accumulation of debt.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "New York Finances," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, New Series, XVIII (March, 1851), 273.

[2] Ibid., p. 274.

[3] Ibid., pp. 279-280.

According to Stanton the Whigs, in order to proceed with their program of reckless extravagance, were proposing to tamper with the Constitution of the state, cheapening that instrument by assailing those provisions in it which had resulted from concession and compromise among conflicting interests. Stanton cautioned, "Wisdom dictates that a people should be cautious in effecting radical changes in their fundamental law. Experience, observation, history, inculcate the lesson, that all change is not improvement--all movement is not progress--all innovation is not reform."[1]

The abandonment of the ideals, values and methods of the past and commitment to a policy of risk and gamble were gross violations of the Jacksonian commandments. Another Jacksonian theme which Stanton explored was the notion of a conspiratorial clique manipulating the agencies of the government to enrich themselves. The conspirators in this case were the contractors, the bankers and the speculators. They were assisted by the profligate politicians who would abet their sinister project by throwing fifteen or twenty millions of stocks into the market causing a fluctuation of prices. The governor, Stanton suggested, was the unwitting tool of the special interests who were planning to profit from the scheme which he had penned.[2] The distinction between the real producers and the speculators was alluded to by Stanton, as was his idea, Jacksonian in tone, of the good state: "The strength and glory of a republican State are not always to be measured by its numbers and its wealth, but rather by the equality and stability of its institutions, the virtue and intelligence of its citizens, the integrity and wisdom of its rulers; . . ."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "New York Finances," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, New Series, XVIII (March, 1851), 276.

[2] Ibid., p. 281.

Whereas the Jacksonians had blamed the monster bank for sins against the economic values of the old Republic, the latter-day New York Jacksonians charged the same sins to the Whig canal policy. The national Jacksonians traced constitutional impiety, aristocratic privilege and plutocratic corruption to the Bank's influence.[2] Stanton had only to substitute the Whig canal policy for the bank to express the same message in the Empire State.

The Whig canal bill, reported to the Senate in April, proposed to authorize a loan of nine million dollars on a pledge of the remainder of the canal revenue in each fiscal year. Stanton and his fellow Democrats regarded this as a violation of the Constitution's clause on debt limitation. Since the Democrats lacked votes to defeat the measure, they chose to forestall action upon it by reducing the Senate membership below the three-fifths of Senate seats required to conduct important business. Stanton and eleven other Democrats resigned their seats on April 17, 1851.[1] Governor Hunt selected May 27 as the day of election to fill the vacancies.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "New York Finances," The United States Magazine and Democratic Review, New Series, XVIII (March, 1851), 281.

[2] Marvin Meyers, The Jacksonian Persuasion (Vintage edition; New York: Random House, 1957), pp. 11-12. According to Meyers the Jacksonians held "an ideal of a chaste republican order, resisting the seductions of risk and novelty, greed and extravagance, rapid motion and complex dealings." Ibid., p. 12. This is descriptive of Stanton's views.

Stanton returned to his district to stand election. His Whig opponent was Josiah B. Williams, a respected Ithaca banker. Stanton toured Seneca, Tompkins and Yates Counties condemning the actions of the Whig legislature and asking for a vote of confidence to send him back to Albany. Stanton also ventured northward to assist a colleague in Oswego county. Stanton was an excellent campaigner and the Whigs sought some way to limit his activities to his own district. When it was learned that Gerrit Smith strongly favored the canal enlargement program, a committee formed to advance this program asked Smith to go into Stanton's district and address the people on the canal question.[3] Smith was asked to "carry the war into Africa" so as to draw the "brazen" Stanton away from his "Missionary Excursions."[4] Smith responded to the complimentary letters by scheduling a tour of the Twenty-fifth District. Stanton was furious at the intrusion and was apparently carried away in his assaults on Smith who accused him of talking in "the random and reckless way which excited politicians are apt to talk in," of lugging the memory of Smith's father into his speeches, and of having accused Smith of hypocrisy in his benevolent and abolitionist activities.[1] To make matters worse, Elizabeth went to a meeting to hear her cousin speak and walked out of the meeting with him. Rumors spread that Stanton's wife and his friends were against him. The truth was that Elizabeth Stanton was ambivalent to the canal question but anxious that her husband should be re-elected. She told Gerrit Smith's daughter, ". . . I would sooner see every relative and friend I have on the face of the earth blown into thin air, and that old ditch running from Buffalo to Albany filled in with mud, than have Henry mortified by a defeat in this election."[2] When she reconsidered her position on the canal question, Elizabeth "came out an unterrified Democrat defending resignation and abhorring debt."[3] Probably Elizabeth Stanton's eccentric dress did more damage to her husband's campaign than her association with Smith; some Democrats vowed that they would not vote for a man whose wife wore bloomers.[1]

---

[1] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), p. 602.

[2] John Bigelow, Diary, April 19, 1851, pp. 214-216, John Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library.

[3] Thomas M. Foote to Gerrit Smith, May 8, 1851, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] William Wilkeson to Gerrit Smith, May 6, 1851, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

---

[1] Gerrit Smith to Henry B. Stanton, May 25, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Vassar College.

[2] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, June 4, 1851, Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 29.

[3] Ibid.

Stanton labored indefatigably to secure re-election, neglecting both his family and his law practice.[2] Nevertheless, the first election reports indicated that he had been defeated by a few votes.[3] Horatio Seymour sent his condolences and congratulations on a good showing.[4] The night after the election, when it was believed that Williams had defeated Stanton, the street urchins, who had shouted "breeches" throughout the campaign, paraded through the streets of Seneca Falls chanting:

> Heigh! ho! the carrion crow,
> Mrs. Stanton's all the go;
> Twenty tailors take the stitches,
> Mrs. Stanton wears the breeches.[5]

When the final tally was made, Stanton was found to have four more votes than Williams and was declared elected. Only six of the resigning Senators had secured re-election, and of these only Stanton lived in a canal district.[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, June 4, 1851, Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary, and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 29.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, May 13, 1851, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[3] John Flannary to Gerrit Smith, May 29, 1851, and Marcus C. Riggs to Gerrit Smith, May 31, 1851, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] Horatio Seymour to Henry B. Stanton, June 3, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[5] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, June 4, 1851, Stanton and Blatch, op. cit., p. 30.

Stanton's opponent, Josiah Williams, contested the election, claiming that fraud had been committed in the counting of votes.[2] On the opening day of the special session called by Governor Hunt, Stanton was stopped in the lobby outside of the chamber by Thurlow Weed, Whig boss and Stanton's employer in Rochester many years previously. Weed informed Stanton of Williams' intention to contest the Senate seat. Weed hinted that he might be able to help.

Weed reminded Stanton of an event which had occurred a few months before in New York. At that time Senator Seward, Weed's protege, had invited the entire legislature to New York to be entertained at the expense of the state. At the public dinner, Stanton, impressed by Seward's anti-slavery course in the Senate, had risen to present a toast to the Whig Senator, praising him for his fidelity to Free Soil principles. Several hours later, Weed awakened Stanton to ask him to revise a manuscript report of Stanton's speech. Stanton rose and spent a half hour revising the report and adding the eulogies of Seward which the reporter had omitted.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 167-168.

[2] "Report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections on Petitions of Electors of the 25th Senatorial District as to the Right of Henry B. Stanton to a Seat," Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Seventy-Fourth Session, 1851 (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), III, n.p.

After recalling this incident, Weed informed Stanton that the Whigs would reconstitute the Committee on Privileges and Elections, and, giving Stanton's shoulder a squeeze that made him wince, said, "I think you will like the change." The new member of the committee was a leading Seward-Weed Whig.[1] When the affidavits of Williams were presented, Stanton claimed that on two technicalities the subject as presented was not within the jurisdiction of the committee.[2] The new committee member asked for an adjournment to give him time to examine the papers. A week later he made the same request. At two subsequent meetings no quorum was present. The issue was thereafter dropped. Weed had repaid the favor.[3]

Stanton hammered away at the canal bill at the special session of the legislature, but to no avail. The measure passed the Senate on June 24 by a vote of 22 to 8.[4] In May of 1852, the state Court of Appeals found the law to be in violation of the State Constitution and thus null and void.[5]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 169-170.

[2] "Report of the Committee on Privileges and Elections on Petitions of Electors of the 25th Senatorial District as to the Right of Henry B. Stanton to a Seat," Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Seventy-Fourth Session, 1851 (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), n.p.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 170.

[4] Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), p. 772.

[5] National Era [Washington, D. C.], May 20, 1852, p. 83.

By this time, Stanton's political career was becoming an intolerable burden. His salary of three hundred dollars as state senator was insufficient to compensate him for the time away from his law practice[1] and his family was on the verge of disintegration. Elizabeth was having a hectic time with the boys at Seneca Falls. With their father away much of the time and Elizabeth a poor disciplinarian, the boys were becoming unmanageable. Neil and Kit, the oldest boys, were sent away to Eagleswood, the school conducted by Angelina and Theodore Weld in Belleville, New Jersey.[2] Even the Welds found the boys difficult. When Henry was away, Elizabeth often took the other children to the Cady home at Johnstown. In the face of these problems, Henry Stanton decided not to stand for re-election in 1851.[3]

Stanton's decision not to be a candidate meant no abatement in his interest in politics or his devotion to the Democracy. He was highly regarded by his Democratic colleagues, being rumored as a possible candidate for Lieutenant Governor.[4] He was selected as a delegate to the Baltimore Convention that would choose the Democratic candidate for President in 1852. Early in 1851 Stanton had decided that the candidate from New York with the best chance of being nominated was William Marcy.[1] Marcy's Hunker views had softened as his presidential chances brightened, and he had made overtures for Barnburner support. The majority of delegates from the Empire State were backing Marcy. A smaller faction, led by Daniel Dickinson, were ostensibly for Lewis Cass but planning to support Dickinson if the Cass boom collapsed.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 170-171.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, February 20, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Papers, Library of Congress; Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Daniel Cady Stanton, December 20, [1851], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, pp. 170-171.

[4] Daniel Cady to Henry B. Stanton, September 15, 1851, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton's distaste for Dickinson had lessened in the course of his adaptation to the Democracy, although he did not favor him for the nomination. Dickinson believed that his hopes very largely depended upon his securing the votes of the Virginia delegation, which had cast its votes on the early ballots for James Buchanan. To assure the Virginians that he could carry New York if he received the nomination, Dickinson asked Stanton, as a representative of the radical wing of the party, to speak to the Virginia delegates. Stanton dutifully presented himself and when asked by the delegates if Dickinson could carry his home state, Stanton replied that Dickinson, Marcy, Douglas or any other man the convention might nominate could capture the electoral votes of the Empire State. When Stanton departed, Dickinson followed him out, thanked him, but expressed his wish that

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 180.

Stanton had mentioned no name but his.[1] The following day Dickinson received the votes of Virginia, but only as part of a plan on the part of the Buchanan supporters to show that none of the second string candidates could mobilize sufficient votes to capture the nomination.[2]

With the New York delegation split, neither Marcy nor Dickinson could hope to take advantage of the deadlock which had prevented the nomination of the major contenders: Buchanan, Cass and Douglas. The New York delegation caucused and Horatio Seymour made a resolution that the delegates cast all of its votes for Marcy. Oliver Charlick, the Hunker, threatened to throw Seymour out of the window and Seymour, sensing the mood of the delegates, withdrew his resolution. New York remained split and the hopes of Marcy and Dickinson faded. On the forty-ninth ballot, the convention nominated a dark-horse, Franklin Pierce of New Hampshire,[3] with William R. King of Alabama as his running mate.

If Pierce's views were a mystery to many of the Democrats at Baltimore, they could not have been so to Henry B. Stanton, a close student of New England politics and a campaigner for Pierce's political foe, John P. Hale. Pierce had supported the gag rule in the House of Representatives, had urged the suppression of all discussion of slavery in the interests of party unity and had, as party leader in New Hampshire, done all within his power to ostracize John P. Hale for his opposition to the annexation of Texas.[1] The Emancipator had referred to Pierce as the head of that faction in New Hampshire which had a "love of slavery in their hearts."[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 181.

[2] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 19-20.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 182.

William King, the Vice Presidential candidate, had voted against the Compromise of 1850 in the Senate, believing some of the provisions unfair to the South.[3] Subsequently he gave his acquiescence to them in the interest of party unity. King was as far removed from abolitionist positions as one could be. He had affirmed his belief in the right of Southerners to take slaves into the territories, holding that territorial legislatures had no power to keep them out. He was, in short, an advocate of that doctrine, the reverse of the Free Soil principle, that slavery was national and freedom was sectional.[4]

The platform drawn up at Baltimore affirmed "that all efforts of the abolitionists or others made to induce Congress to interfere with questions of slavery, or to take incipient steps in relation thereto, are calculated to lead to the most alarming and dangerous consequences."[1] The Democrats promised to enforce all of the provisions of the Compromise of 1850, including the Fugitive Slave Law, which could not with fidelity to the Constitution be repealed. The war with Mexico was called "just and necessary."[2]

---

[1] Richard H. Sewell, John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965), pp. 46, 55-57, 73-74, 77.

[2] The Emancipator [Boston], March 3, 1847, p. 178.

[3] William R. King to Robert G. Scott, May 20, 1852, Albany Argus, May 31, 1852, p. 3.

[4] Salmon P. Chase to Benjamin F. Butler, n.d. [1852], scratch copy, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

Salmon P. Chase, regarding the platform and the candidates of the Democracy, concluded that "consistency, honor, self-respect . . . indeed all obligations, moral and political" demanded opposition by Free Soil Democrats to the Democratic candidates.[3] Stanton, however, decided to back Pierce and King!

Chase, Charles Francis Adams, Joshua Giddings, Lewis Tappan, Julius LeMoyne, Austin Willey, Frederick Douglass, John Palfrey, Charles Sumner, Hiram Barney and a host of other prominent Free Soil and abolitionist leaders supported the Free Democratic ticket of John P. Hale and George W. Julian. Their platform denounced slavery as a sin against God and a crime against man, called the Fugitive Slave Law unjust and unconstitutional and called for action to extinguish slavery wherever Congress had the power.[4] This was a platform consistent with Stanton's deepest convictions, yet he rejected it.

---

[1] Kirk H. Porter and Donald B. Johnson (comp.), National Party Platforms, 1840-1956 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p. 17.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Salmon P. Chase to Benjamin F. Butler, n.d. [1852], scratch copy, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[4] Porter and Johnson, op. cit., p. 18.

Stanton had told Chase in 1850, "In my sober judgment the day for 'third parties' on the slavery question is gone."[1] He maintained this position despite the obvious failure of his "bore from within" policy. Stanton's adherence to the Democracy was at best naive and at worst insincere. Politics and anti-slavery had competed for Stanton's soul for decades. Anti-slavery won out in the 1830's. The two were joined in the 1840's so that no choice was necessitated. When a clear choice had to be made in 1852, Stanton chose politics.

The Democratic Party had offered Stanton respectability, prestige, association with and acceptance by men of high status, and the possibility of reward. Posterity might ultimately applaud adherence to principle, but it could grant no immediate reward. The personal sacrifice demanded for renouncing the Democracy was more than Stanton was willing to make.

Stanton returned from Baltimore via New York and participated in a huge ratification meeting in that city. The first address of the evening was delivered by the candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Indiana, who praised the Fugitive Slave Law, calling it the cornerstone of the Democratic Party. After General Pillow of Tennessee excused himself from making a speech because of illness, Stanton rose and expressed his regret that the assembly could not hear more from a man who had fought well with General Pierce in the valley of Mexico! The once implacable foe of the Mexican War then proceeded to explain why the Baltimore convention had chosen the General from New Hampshire. Stanton said that Pierce had represented the Democratic Party principle of progress. Through that party, Stanton proclaimed, the suffrage had been taken from the exclusive grasp of the landed interest and spread among the masses of the people. He chastised the Whigs for their support of a national bank, a high tariff and nationally sponsored internal improvements. In establishing the program which he wanted the Democracy to take to the people, Stanton dismissed the slavery issue without referring to it by name by saying that the issue of 1848 was "past and gone."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon Chase, September 23, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

A correspondent of the National Era expressed what must have been the sentiment of the men Stanton had stood shoulder to shoulder with in the abolitionist movement. "Think of Stanton," he wrote, "who once blew with so much power, the anti-slavery bugle, . . . resolving that anti-slavery agitation diminished 'the happiness of the people' and ought not to be countenanced by any friend of our political institutions [sic]. Poor Stanton! how art thou fallen."[2] The Era editor referred with dismay to Stanton, John A. Dix and John Van Buren, who had praised the nomination of Franklin Pierce as loudly as they had praised in 1848 the nomination of Van Buren, "made on Principles and for Purposes directly opposed to those on which the nomination of Mr. Pierce is now made!"[1]

---

[1] Evening Post [New York], June 10, 1852, p. 1.

[2] "Manhattan," June 11, 1852 to National Era [Washington, D. C.], June 17, 1852, p. 99.

Stanton delivered a major speech on behalf of Pierce and King in Albany on June 11, 1852. He once more characterized the Democratic Party as the engine of progress and reform, while the Whigs were said to be "more ready to conserve than improve." Forgetting the Negro completely, Stanton proclaimed that the Democratic Party had worked for equal opportunity for all. The Democratic Party too was the defender of state rights. "A strict construction of the constitution," Stanton claimed, "is essential to the preservation of the Union." Each state should be left to regulate its own affairs in order to avoid "the evils and oppressions of central consolidation." Government meddling, as in internal improvements which could better be handled by individual enterprise, could only lead to logrolling legislation and waste. Stanton proclaimed himself opposed to the national bank, and to the Whig plan to give western lands to railroads instead of to settlers. It was time, he declared, to rid the country of the corruptions and maladministration of the Whigs in Washington.[2]

Stanton praised Pierce as a man of "large and liberal mind," "the head of no clique or cabal." The New Hampshire Democrat was said to be "shrewd, frank and independent," the "soul of honor and generosity." In support of his candidacy the mass of the Democratic Party of New York would extinguish the smouldering embers of intraparty conflict and foster union and undisturbed harmony. For his part, Stanton maintained, he would have supported Cass, Douglas, Buchanan, Houston or Dickinson had one of these been selected by the Baltimore nominating convention.[1]

---

[1] National Era [Washington, D. C.], June 17, 1852, p. 98.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of June 11, 1852, Albany Argus, June 17, 1852, p. 3.

Stanton labored indefatigably for the national and state Democratic tickets, making major addresses in Albany, Syracuse and Buffalo and assuming the task of holding the faction-ridden party together in the state and bringing western New York into the Democratic column.[2]

Pierce carried New York and twenty-six other states to Scott's four. The efforts to keep the Democracy unified behind their gubernatorial candidate, Horatio Seymour, were successful; Seymour received more votes than Pierce in the Empire State. John P. Hale received only slightly more than one-half of the total that Van Buren had received in 1848. The Democratic Party had received its mandate to rule.

Stanton's thoughts next turned to the composition of Pierce's cabinet. Three factions in New York contended for the post which they expected to be bestowed by Pierce. The conservative Hunkers favored Daniel Dickinson. The moderates, or Soft-Shell Hunkers, wanted Marcy appointed. Stanton and the radical wing of the party backed John A. Dix. Stanton told C. Levi Woodbury, one of Pierce's lieutenants, that Dix would be the least obnoxious choice to both the Marcy and Dickinson wings. If Dix could not be selected, then Marcy would be the second choice.[1] Pierce was essentially in agreement. He would have liked to have appointed his boyhood chum, Dix, to the post of Secretary of State, but the southern wing of the party would not abide the selection of this former Free Soiler. Pierce, therefore, named Marcy to head the cabinet, made Dix Assistant Treasurer of New York and promised Dix that he would be made Minister to France.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of June 11, 1852, Albany Argus, June 17, 1852, p. 3.

[2] Albany Argus, October 25, 1852, pp. 1-3; ibid., November 2, 1852, p. 2; and Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton believed that in return for his valuable campaign labors on behalf of Pierce he would receive a post in the new administration. What he wanted most was a "first rate consulship," which would satisfy his pecuniary needs. He could take such a position for three years, he told Woodbury, and then return to help Pierce plan and fight the battle for re-election. If not given the consulship, Stanton next preferred the post of Solicitor of the Treasury Department, which "would enable me to do some service to the administration, without beggaring myself." If appointed to this position, Stanton affirmed, he could exert more influence on behalf of the administration and "carry out our views in respect to the succession" than he could as a United States District Attorney, a post which had been mentioned by Woodbury. With reluctance, Stanton said, he would accept the attorneyship if it were offered without his solicitation. He had promised others seeking that post that he would not apply for it.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Levi Woodbury, November 12, 1852, and January 10, 1853, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 183-184; and National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 22, 1853, p. 150.

Stanton amassed a collection of strong letters from leading men from all factions of the New York party, including Dix, Seymour, Sanford Church and the Democratic representatives in Congress, urging his appointment to whichever post he desired.[2] He directed his appeals and endorsements to Pierce's entourage rather than through any cabinet members,[3] possibly because he did not trust Marcy as much as he proclaimed, and possibly to avoid incurring any obligations which would require his adherence to one or another faction in the future. When no appointment was forthcoming by the spring, he investigated and discovered that New York's quota had been proclaimed filled. He dispatched a letter to Marcy complaining that positions charged to

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Levi Woodbury, November 12, December 23, 1852; January 10, February 21, 1853, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Levi Woodbury, February 21, 1853, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Levi Woodbury, January 10, 1853, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Library of Congress.

New York had gone to men who had not resided in the state for years. Stanton told Marcy that he regarded this as "grossly unjust" as did "many leading men" in New York. Stanton still had hopes that the nominee for the Solicitorship might not accept. He hinted at what the consequences might be if loyal men of his stripe went unrewarded: "Things are looking badly at Albany. I think the National and State Administrations will need the aid of all their active friends here, to prevent New York falling into the hands of the common enemy next fall."[1]

Pierce's intention to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law and to promote territorial acquisition, announced in his inaugural address, did not dampen Stanton's intention to serve the administration. Stanton waited two weeks. When no appointment was forthcoming, he raged. His lack of success in securing an appointment, he knew, had resulted from Marcy's refusal to approve him. This he had heard from another member of the cabinet. Stanton wrote to Marcy, recalling his efforts to consolidate the party, to support Marcy's candidacy for the Presidency and to bring the Democratic organization to success on election day. Stanton asked rhetorically whether the administration could afford to set aside men who had performed such notable service for the party and added an implied threat, "Let the past answer the question. I hope it may not be left to the future to answer it."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 16, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton's support of the Democracy during the first half of the decade of the 1850's was a dark chapter in the life of the reformer. By a series of compromises begun in 1848, Stanton had come to virtually abandon the causes of freedom and equality for which he had once been spokesman. Stanton had wearied in pursuit of an objective which seemed unattainable. Stanton found himself ignoring the great moral issue that slavery presented and concentrating his efforts toward achieving success for the Democratic Party. This abandonment of principle was rationalized by maintaining the conviction that the Democratic Party could ultimately be brought to accept a desirable position on slavery.

Stanton's action, or inaction, during the early 1850's revealed more than a lack of determination to pursue a cause in the face of a nearly hopeless situation. A serious character flaw was revealed as well. Stanton manifested his vanity and desire for personal gain through political preferment. The contrast between moral reformer and political opportunist was shocking. Stanton's labors for the Democratic Party, which were in large measure dictated by selfish interests, prepared the way for a crisis of gigantic proportions. That this crisis ultimately resulted in the abolition of slavery in no way excuses Stanton's behavior. The course of events, however, was to show Stanton the error of his ways.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to William L. Marcy, April 29, 1853, William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress.

CHAPTER XII

BUILDING A NEW PARTY

Although Stanton failed to receive a position in the new administration, his faction of the Democratic Party in New York was amply rewarded by Pierce, who believed that their support was essential for the success of his administration. The opposition to Pierce among the New York Democrats came instead from the men who had supported the candidacy of Lewis Cass in 1848, and who regarded the Barnburners as apostate Democrats. Led by ex-Senator Dickinson and Edwin Croswell this faction, known variously as "Adamantines," "Hard Shells," or "Hards," refused to have anything more to do with the pro-administration "Soft Shells," or "Softs," led by Marcy. At the New York State Democratic convention at Brintnall's Hall in Syracuse, September 13, 1853, a dispute over the selection of the chairman precipitated a withdrawal by the "Hards." They convened at the Globe Hotel and passed resolutions backing the Baltimore platform of 1852, the Compromise of 1850, Pierce's inaugural address, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and complimenting their leader, Daniel Dickinson.

The "Softs" remained at Brintnall's Hall and proceeded to nominate candidates. Henry S. Randall was offered the nomination for Secretary of State and declined. Henry B. Stanton, probably in the interest of party unity, withdrew his name as a candidate for Attorney General.[1] The convention nominated a slate of candidates which they hoped would be accepted by the Hards and passed a series of resolutions backing the Baltimore platform of 1852, Pierce's inaugural address, the Compromise of 1850, and denouncing any further agitation of the slavery question.[2] The resolutions of the "Softs," indistinguishable from those of the Hards, were opposed vocally only by the former Barnburner, Preston King.[3] Although the Party did not come together, all that divided the two wings was the resentment of the "Hards" over what they regarded as the "Treason of 1848," the belief that the "Softs" could not be trusted, and their abhorrence of Pierce's handling of patronage in New York. On issues and principles there was practically no disagreement expressed.[4] Despite the retreat on principles by the Softs at the Syracuse Convention of 1853, Stanton did not abandon them. The decision to abandon third party activity was to him irrevocable. If Stanton left the Democracy, he had nowhere to go.

In 1854 Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, which repealed the Missouri Compromise and opened more land in the Louisiana Purchase to slavery if the majority of settlers in a territory desired it. The law shook the Democratic and Whig parties to their foundations. Anti-slavery extension men from both organizations began holding fusion conventions throughout the North in the summer and fall of 1854, often with the intention of forming a new political party. The name "Republican," apparently first suggested at a caucus of Anti-Nebraska bill congressmen in May, was adopted almost spontaneously where new organizations were formed.[1]

---

[1] National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 22, 1853, p. 150. The report in the Era suggests that the nominations preceded the platform, which indicates that it was not disapproval of the platform but a desire to placate the Hards that led Randall and Stanton, radicals on the slavery question, to turn down nominations.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., September 29, 1853, p. 154.

[4] Ibid., October 6, 1853, p. 158.

In New York anti-Nebraska meetings were held at Friendship, New York, in May, at Albany in July, and at New York City on August 8.[2] Stanton, apparently unsure about what would materialize from these conventions and unwilling to commit himself prematurely, did not attend them. A large and enthusiastic convention at Saratoga Springs on August 16 drew such men as Horace Greeley of the Whigs, Preston King of the Democrats and Hiram Barney of the Free Soilers.[3] A new party did not materialize from this convention, although the participants were determined to either win their respective parties over to an anti-Nebraska stand or to lead a withdrawal from their parties to a new one. Preston King tried at the convention of the Soft Democrats, held in Syracuse in September of 1854, to secure a renunciation of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and a determination to see its repeal. While the delegates referred to the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as "inexpedient and unnecessary," they expressed their conviction that the consequences of the Nebraska Act would be favorable. They denounced any agitation for repeal of the law and reiterated their unqualified support for the administration of Franklin Pierce. King and Abijah Mann walked out of the convention in disgust.[1]

---

[1] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 322.

[2] Gordon S. P. Kleeberg, The Formation of the Republican Party as a National Political Organization (New York: Moods Publishing Company, 1911), p. 18.

[3] Nevins, op. cit., p. 320.

Although there is no evidence to indicate that Stanton publicly repudiated the Soft Democrats for their stand, he was nonetheless interested in lending his support to a fusion movement, if one materialized.[2] Stanton cautiously refused to participate in the construction of a new party until it was clear that it would be a reality. In the fall of 1854, the obstacle in the way of fusion was the resistance of William H. Seward. Seward and Thurlow Weed regarded the Whig organization in the state as the only one capable of controlling the legislature, returning Seward to the United States Senate, and securing him a Presidential nomination in 1856. Stanton and many other anti-slavery Democrats, on the other hand, were unwilling to capitulate to Seward and become Whigs.[1] Consequently, the chance for a strong fusion movement in the fall of 1854 was missed. A convention of anti-Nebraska men met in Auburn on September 26 and accepted the Whig nominees for office.[2] Stanton remained at least nominally a Democrat, despite the fact that the Whig platform was strongly anti-Nebraska and the candidates were in harmony with that platform.

---

[1] Albany Evening Journal, September 7, 1854, p. 2; and National Era [Washington, D. C.], September 14, 1854, pp. 156-157.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, May 31, 1855, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Papers, Harvard University. Stanton, in this letter, implied strongly his support of fusion the previous year.

The contest between slavery and freedom for Kansas began not long after Pierce had affixed his signature to the Nebraska Act. Emigrants began entering Kansas during the summer of 1854 and a full territorial government, headed by Andrew H. Reeder, was established in the fall. On election day more than 1700 Missourians, encouraged by pro-slavery politicians, crossed the border to cast votes in Kansas and send a pro-slavery delegate to Congress. This was an omen of future depradations from the same source. Again in 1855, in the election for the territorial legislature, Missourians poured across the line to overwhelm by ballot the free settlers who had come from New England and the Ohio Valley. Alarmed by the notorious frauds which had secured the election of the pro-slavery legislature, Governor Reeder headed East to arouse public sentiment and to warn the administration. Pierce listened but would not act, while the pro-slavery legislature in Kansas proceeded to place slavery in full possession of the territory and push through bills flagrantly denying the civil liberties of anti-slavery citizens. Governor Reeder's vetoes of the bills were easily overridden and memorials were sent to Washington demanding Reeder's removal. The governor's indiscreet land speculations gave his opponents the opportunity to overthrow him. Pierce bent to pressure and peremptorily dismissed the governor. His replacement, Wilson Shannon of Cincinnati, recognized the pro-slavery legislature and expressed his desire for Kansas to become a slave state.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, May 31, 1855, Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University; Jeter A. Isely, Horace Greeley and the Republican Party, 1853-1861 (Vol. III of Princeton Studies in History. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 70.

[2] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 320.

The acts of the Missouri "border ruffians" angered Stanton, who participated in a protest meeting held in Seneca Falls in May of 1855.[2] The removal of Governor Reeder, called by Stanton "one of the most scandalous acts in the history of the country," and the refusal of the Soft Democrats in their Syracuse Convention in September of 1855 to condemn the depredations in Kansas provided the occasion for Stanton's secession from the Democratic Party.[3]

Stanton attended the September convention at Weiting Hall,

---

[1] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 306-316, 384-390.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, May 31, 1855, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of September 27, 1855, Albany Evening Journal, October 2, 1855, p. 2.

Syracuse, where the Whigs merged with the new Republican organization.[1] On the evening of September 27 in Rochester, he made his first Republican speech. "We have arrived at a point," Stanton declared, "where to be silent is to be contemptible--where acquiescence is infamy." Stanton ridiculed "the radical Democracy of New York" for acquiescing when they whould have openly resisted, for having "spoken with bated breath when they should have uttered indignant thunders."[2] Stanton confessed his own errors. He had, he explained, remained silent when he should have spoken, in part because of a "constitutional distaste for a perpetual controversy." Stanton explained that he did not regret one word that he had ever spoken or one line that he had ever written on the slavery question. His sin was in the silent acquiescence which he gave to the actions of his party.[3]

Stanton castigated the Syracuse Convention of the "Softs" for failing to condemn the repeal of the Missouri Compromise and the border ruffians in Kansas and he declared it the duty of Congress to veto the acts of the "fraudulent legislature of Kansas." The depredations of 1855, Stanton claimed, were a natural result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act which had overturned an "ancient landmark of freedom," the Missouri Compromise. The Syracuse convention had betrayed the cause of freedom, he said, by responding to the tremendous pressure applied by the administration upon those who had been the recipients of its patronage.[1] Stanton seemed to understand the grevious error upon which he had built his Democratic activities for seven years. As he phrased it, "My experiences in these relations [i.e. fusion movements] convinces me that there is more genuine Democracy in one-half of the party when it is divided, than in the whole of it when united."[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 184.

[2] Henry B. Stanton speech, Albany Evening Journal, October 2, 1855, p. 2.

[3] Ibid.

Stanton had left the Liberty Party to join a general movement against the aggressions of the Slave Power. The Compromise of 1850, despite Stanton's repugnance for some of its provisions, had meant a cessation of the slavery controversy. His statement of 1855: "I am tired of Slavery agitation. I love peace and my profession, home and my books,"[3] would have been more appropriate in 1850. What he did not fully comprehend in 1850 as he did in 1855 was illustrated in the qualification of the statement: "But Slavery will give us no peace."[4] The "us" that Henry B. Stanton had in mind was the white man, for certainly slavery had never given the Negro any peace. Henry B. Stanton in the late 1830's and 1840's had forgotten the Negro. The deeper he had become involved in civil liberties and anti-extension of slavery, the more he became associated with men who did not share his equalitarian principles, the less concerned he became with the man for whom as a Lane Seminary student he had begun the crusade: the slave.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton speech, September 27, 1855, Albany Evening Journal, October 2, 1855, p. 2.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Speech of September 27, 1855 at Rochester, Albany Evening Journal, October 2, 1855, p. 2.

[4] Ibid.

Stanton had come to believe, by 1855, that any compromise with the South was impossible. "Nothing less than complete submission on the part of the North will appease the domineering Spirit of the South," he claimed. "I dread the approaching storm. There must be a decisive, a final conflict between Freedom and Slavery." The Republican Party was the vanguard of freedom and Stanton was prepared to climb aboard.[1] The Democratic Party, on which he had pinned his hopes for the blocking of the Slave Power, he called a "pack horse to carry Slavery into free territory."[2]

Thurlow Weed, who took a major part in planning the Republican campaign of 1855, assigned Henry Stanton to western New York where the talented orator traveled from county to county delivering a speech nearly every day in the month preceding the election.[3] Stanton was very enthusiastic about the Republican movement, which allowed him to combine the roles of anti-slavery reformer and major party politician. He stood shoulder to shoulder with former allies like John P. Hale and former adversaries like William Seward. All former animosities seemed to have disappeared in the common cause.[1] Despite his efforts, the Republican ticket in New York was defeated by a rising tide of Know-Nothingism, which had appealed to anti-immigrant, anti-Seward and even some anti-slavery men.[2] Stanton believed that Republican weakness stemmed from the failure of the party to enlist many prominent Whigs in the campaign.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Speech of September 27, 1855 at Rochester, Albany Evening Journal, October 2, 1855, p. 2.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Speech at Herkimer, October 25, 1855, Albany Evening Journal, October 26, 1855, p. 2.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thurlow Weed, October 15, 1855, Thurlow Weed Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

Stanton was a delegate to the Republican national convention of 1856 at Philadelphia. John C. Fremont, the young and adventurous explorer, was nominated on the first ballot and Stanton was assigned to secure speakers for the crucial state of Pennsylvania and to contribute his own splendid oratorical powers.[4] Stanton recruited mainly in New York, New England and Pennsylvania, but his field was enlarged as the campaign progressed, carrying him as far west as Ohio. Stanton would enter a state, deliver speeches himself on behalf of the party, enlist promising orators, draw up a schedule for their appearances in the Keystone State and then enter a new area to commence the cycle again. His plan for Pennsylvania was to hold small meetings from town to town in the eastern and central portion of the state while scheduling mass meetings in the north and west where the old-line Whigs handled local affairs.[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Elizabeth Smith Miller, Sunday evening, n.d. (1855), Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Susan B. Anthony, November 4, 1855, Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 62; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 185. For an example of Henry B. Stanton's closeness to Seward see Henry B. Stanton to William H. Seward, July n.d. 1856, William H. Seward Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 185; Henry B. Stanton to Charles Sumner, May 31, 1855, Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thurlow Weed, October 15, 1855, Thurlow Weed Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, p. 185.

Pennsylvania was not only a crucial state for Fremont, it was also a difficult one. The Democrats had ample funds and an efficient organization in Buchanan's home state. The Republicans, on the other hand, were inadequately financed while former Whigs and Democrats did not always work well together.[2] Stanton believed that his efforts were being thwarted by Republican leaders who thought they were "carrying Pennsylvania, New Jersey etc. by guzzling champagne, telling large yarns and making small bets and thus creating a public opinion that everything is safe." Republican inefficiency, he feared, would lose the state. He told Greeley in August that, if the election were held in that month, Buchanan would capture the state by thirty thousand votes.[1] Stanton thought that Fremont might carry California and New Jersey to compensate for the anticipated loss of Pennsylvania and he took a hand in securing men and money for the New Jersey operation.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Horace Greeley, August 5, 1856, Horace Greeley Papers, New York Public Library; Andrew Crandall, The Early History of the Republican Party (Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1930), p. 263.

[2] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 506.

When the votes were counted Pennsylvania, New Jersey and California were found to have gone to Buchanan, as had Indiana and Illinois. The combined vote of the Republican and American Parties in Pennsylvania was almost equal to Buchanan's vote; in New Jersey it surpassed the Democratic total. Nationally, Fremont and Fillmore's combined total exceeded that of Buchanan's. Defeat, then, although naturally disappointing, was not disheartening. If the Know Nothing vote could be added to the Republican column in 1860, a different result could be anticipated. Moreover, the Republican Party was young and gaining in strength. Good organization and more funds might spell success.[3] Stanton was encouraged by the changes in the mood of the public. He visited towns and cities in which he had delivered abolition speeches in the turbulent thirties and, he told his wife, delivered speeches more radical than those of two decades before. Whereas unruly mobs led by men of standing had beseiged his meetings then, in 1856 he was

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Horace Greeley, August 5, 1856, Horace Greeley Papers, New York Public Library.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas Haines Dudley, August 15, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

[3] Allan Nevins, Ordeal of the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947), II, 510-514.

"applauded to the echo by a throng of the wealthiest ladies and gentlemen of the aristocratic portion of the people" as well as by hundreds of mechanics and laboring men.[1] Opposition to slavery extension, although not abolition, had become respectable, as had Henry B. Stanton.

His election labors over, Stanton, exhausted in mind and body, returned to Elizabeth and his six children--Harriot had been born in January, 1856--and his squashes and strawberries on his ten acres at Seneca Falls. There he recovered his strength before undertaking a series of Lyceum lectures throughout the state.[2] When his Lyceum engagements were completed, Stanton traveled to the national capital to tend to legal matters for his clients. There Stanton spent much time observing events in Congress, one of his favorite pastimes. He enjoyed meeting and conversing with the famous men who were leading the country and exchanging news and gossip. On one of these occasions, Stanton had just finished speaking to Joshua Giddings in the House when that venerable legislator rose to address his colleagues on a pending bill. After speaking for ten minutes, he collapsed in his chair and was taken to the Speaker's room where John Quincy Adams, following similar circumstances, had died. Stanton's forebodings that

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, October 19, 1856, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, November 28, 1856, in W. Freeman Galpin, "Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Gerrit Smith," New York History, XVI (1925), 323.

Giddings might not recover were unwarranted.[1] The anti-slavery warrior did recover and rendered further service to the cause, not the least of which was an important contribution to the Republican platform in 1860.

In the same month, Preston Brooks, the Congressman who, in May of 1856, had assaulted Charles Sumner on the Senate floor, died. Most of the Northerners, Stanton told Elizabeth, regarded his fate as a "Providential retribution for his great crime."[2] When the eulogies were delivered, a representative from Tennessee, aptly named Savage, spoke of Brutus' murder of Caesar as a noble act which immortalized him and of which all posterity had approved. The obvious allusion to the beating of Sumner, Stanton reported, "created general disgust in the House and galleries." Stanton quoted with approval the statement of one Republican who said that since the Lord had "'done up his share of the business thoroughly, we can afford to let the baffled dogs snarl.'"[3]

Stanton enjoyed his stay in Washington. He lobbied for clients, extended his knowledge of national politics, earned badly needed money for his large family and attended parties at which he met

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 18, 1857, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 28, 1857, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 29, 1857, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Washington notables.[1] Stanton told his wife that, but for the pecuniary needs of his family, he would return to Seneca Falls with haste.[2] In fact, love of family and love of politics were of about equal strength in Stanton. Indeed, the role of "good provider" may have been a convenient justification for his long absences from home. When Henry was on his way home, he would stop at Albany to visit with former associates, pay his respects to Thurlow Weed at the Evening Journal office and fill his head with the latest political news.[3]

The Republican Victory

The New York Republicans lost seats in the legislature in the election of 1857, although the party managed to retain control of both houses. Stanton, who believed that public sentiment against slavery was in advance of the party, blamed the reversal on Republican unwillingness to take a strong stand against the Dred Scott decision. He also believed that over-emphasis on unpopular economic policies had cost the party votes.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elihu Washburne, November 11, 1857, Elihu Washburne Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to Daniel Cady Stanton, February 22, 1859, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 29, 1857, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 231.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 28, 1857, February 14, 1858, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] For example, Henry B. Stanton to William H. Seward, March 9, 1858, William H. Seward Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

Stanton had had sufficient experience with the Democratic Party in New York to be aware of the forces which tended to pull a political organization apart. Whigs and anti-slavery Democrats alike had put aside doctrinal differences and personal dislikes to form the Republican Party. The fusion was endangered by the setback at the polls and by the over-emphasis on controversial issues not germane to slavery. The party was fortunate in having as its national chairman the merchant and businessman, Edwin D. Morgan. The Empire State Republicans nominated and elected Morgan governor in 1858. His skill and impartiality fostered the growth of the party in the state and nation and helped prepare it for the important campaign of 1860.[2]

Stanton wanted a thorough anti-slavery man to be the Republican Presidential candidate in 1860.[3] Of all of the hopefuls it would seem that Salmon P. Chase was the most attractive to Stanton personally and ideologically. He probably would have jumped upon a Chase bandwagon had there been one in sight. Influential men in New York like William Cullen Bryant, Parke Godwin, George Opdyke, Charles Dana, Horace Greeley, Frederick Conklin, Governor Morgan, and David Dudley

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elihu Washburne, November 11, 1857, Elihu Washburne Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Reinhard H. Luthin, The First Lincoln Campaign (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944), pp. 17-18.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, June 24, 1858, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Field were either pro-Chase or leaning toward him.[1] However, no movement was organized to exploit this developing support. Chase made no personal appearance in New York until January of 1860 and he had no regular campaign manager.[2] His friend, Hiram Barney, a New York lawyer, was the closest to being one, but he had neither the talent nor the necessary support from the candidate to start a successful Chase boom.[3]

Stanton looked elsewhere. When the Democracy split at the Charleston Convention in April, he thought that Seward would probably be able to overcome that opposition to him which had derived from the fear that he might lead the party to defeat.[4] Western New York was strongly pro-Seward, Stanton explained to Chase later, and he acquiesced in the general sentiment of his locality in giving his support to his

---

[1] James M. Ashley to Salmon P. Chase, August 26, 1859, J. M. McCray to Salmon P. Chase, March 19, 1860, James M. Ashley to Salmon P. Chase, February 17, 1858, James Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, March 17, 1860, James M. Ashley to Salmon P. Chase, February 17, 1858; James A. Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, May 2, 1859, and D. D. Marshall to Salmon P. Chase, April 30, 1859, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Donnal V. Smith, "Salmon P. Chase and the Election of 1860," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (1930), 527.

[2] Ibid.

[3] James M. Ashley to Salmon P. Chase, February 17, 1858, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Samuel Wilkeson, Jr., May 6, 1860, William H. Seward Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

"friend and neighbor," the Auburn Republican.[1] Stanton's decision to support Seward was undoubtedly also influenced by the fact that his brother-in-law, Samuel Wilkeson, had been a business associate and was on intimate terms with Thurlow Weed, Seward's closest political friend. Stanton's support of Seward, a man inferior to Chase in strength of character and equalitarian sentiments, indicated once more how much Stanton was to be guided in his actions by expediency, however much he might attempt to clothe his motives in the garb of righteousness. If Seward were to be the candidate, and there is reason to doubt Stanton's statement to Chase that he had thought Seward could not win,[2] Stanton stood to gain materially from supporting him.

The Republicans met in the Wigwam in Chicago on May 16. Stanton did not attend the convention but was keenly interested in it.[3] Horace Greeley and David Dudley Field, Seward's most important adversaries, had been purged from the New York delegation by Thurlow Weed. Greeley secured a proxy vote with the Oregon delegation, however, and with Field, an observer at the convention, he circulated among the delegates in an attempt to convince them that Seward could not carry New York in the election. William Cullen Bryant and James Wadsworth, both former Democrats, sent letters which were used to support the contention of Greeley and Field.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Stanton told Wilkeson in May that he thought Seward would win the nomination, Henry B. Stanton to Samuel Wilkeson, May 6, 1860, William H. Seward Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester.

[3] Chase's biographer erroneously states that Stanton voted for Seward at Chicago. Albert B. Hart, Salmon Portland Chase (Vol. XXVIII of American Statesman Series. 40 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), p. 185. Hart seems to have inferred this from Stanton's statement to Chase that he had supported Seward, Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. For a list of delegates from New York to the convention see Paul M. Angle and Earl S. Miers, Fire the Salute! Abe Lincoln Is Nominated! Murat Halstead Reports the Republican National Convention in Chicago, May 16, 17, and 18, 1860 (Centennial edition; Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1960), pp. 55-56.

When it was clear to Chase's New York backers that their favorite could not win the nomination, they switched to Lincoln as the man to defeat Seward.[2] It was Seward's misfortune that, despite his large number of enthusiastic supporters, he was unacceptable to many supporters of the other candidates. Some distrusted him, believing that he would maltreat former Democrats in the party. Others regretted his association with the unsavory Weed. A large number were convinced that Seward would lead the Republican Party to defeat. When the contest was clearly between Lincoln and Seward, these men dropped their favorites and voted for Lincoln. The results of the third ballot indicated that Lincoln needed but one and one-half votes to win. Cartter of Ohio then rose to announce the change of four votes from

---

[1] Henry M. Field, The Life of David Dudley Field (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898), pp. 133, 138; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 214.

[2] James A. Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, May 30, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Chase to Lincoln and the Illinoisian was nominated.[1]

Stanton was satisfied with the nomination of Lincoln. He had been impressed by the Cooper Union speech which the Illinois statesman had made in February,[2] and he believed that "Old Abe" would make "an able and honest president." Lincoln would be free of any taint of corruption. Seward, on the other hand, would have had to share the odium attached to the "rascally conduct" of the New York legislature, which had been under the direction of his mentor, Thurlow Weed.[3]

Stanton participated energetically in the election campaign. He secured speakers for New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, traveled throughout central and western New York and New England making speeches, and prepared pamphlets in support of the Republican cause.[4] For the second time since he had begun campaigning in 1828, Stanton backed a winner. Abraham Lincoln received one hundred eighty electoral votes, fifty-seven more than the combined total of his three opponents, Douglas, Breckinridge and Bell, but his popular vote was less than forty per cent of the total cast.

---

[1] Paul M. Angle and Earl S. Miers, Fire the Salute! Abe Lincoln Is Nominated! Murat Halstead Reports the Republican National Convention in Chicago, May 16, 17, and 18, 1860 (Centennial edition; Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, Inc., 1960), pp. 38-45.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 214.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, July 10, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to Edwin D. Morgan, July 24, August 10, September 5, September 17, 1860; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, pp. 213, 284.

The Scramble for Offices

Once Lincoln had been elected, Stanton's thoughts turned to the selection of cabinet members who would be sound on principles and who would distribute patronage through the proper channels. It was commonly believed that Seward, whom Stanton had supported before the convention, would not take a place in the new administration, so Stanton looked elsewhere for someone to support. He had hopes that his old friend, Salmon P. Chase, would be appointed by Lincoln to head the cabinet, and he begged Chase to accept the position if it were offered to him.[1] On November 24, Stanton attended a meeting of over thirty prominent New York Republicans which was held at the home of Hiram Barney, a close friend and business associate of Chase. In attendance were Lieutenant Governor Campbell, Charles A. Dana, city editor of the Tribune, Parke Godwin of the Evening Post, William Curtis Noyes, a lawyer and former Whig, Judges John T. Hogeboom and Thomas B. Carroll and Abijah Mann, a former Congressman. Stanton declared himself strongly in favor of Chase's appointment as Secretary of State. The other gentlemen present were also eager for Chase to head the cabinet. A committee was appointed to press their views upon Senator Lyman Trumbull, the Illinois Republican who was spending a few days in New

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 13, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

York, in the hopes that Trumbull would acquaint Lincoln with their desires.[1]

William Cullen Bryant, Noyes and Mann called upon Trumbull, manifested their desires concerning Chase and explained that the appointment of Seward to the first post in the cabinet would be disastrous. Seward, they told the Senator, would reward with jobs the same men who had recently disgraced the party by securing the corrupt passage of street-railway bills in the New York legislature. Trumbull passed the information on to Lincoln. The President-elect explained to Trumbull, in response, that he was obliged to name Seward, the unanimous choice of the New York delegation at Chicago, but that he would personally take care of the question of "corrupt jobs."[2] Trumbull, it appears, did not inform the Chase men that Lincoln had already decided on Seward.

At a second meeting of the Chase men held on November 26, Stanton was appointed to a committee of ten, which was to attend to the subject of cabinet appointments.[3] The committee conferred in Albany on December 4. They decided that of the available Republicans of Democratic antecedents for whichever cabinet post was to be given to a New Yorker, the most worthy candidates were George Opdyke, a former Free Soiler, and James Wadsworth, a wealthy land owner in Genesee County and former Barnburner. Of the two, Stanton preferred Wadsworth.[1]

---

[1] James A. Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, November 27, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 30, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Horace White, The Life of Lyman Trumbull (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), pp. 139-141.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 30, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Early in January, Stanton went to Washington on law business, and with the intention of keeping an eye on political developments. A contest was developing between the Seward-Weed faction and the former Democrats for influence in the Lincoln administration. The alliance of Whigs and radical Democrats in the Republican Party had remained strong as long as unity was required to win the election. Once victory had been gained, each group sought the lion's share of offices. Thurlow Weed was an ingenious, and often unscrupulous, wire-puller, who would have left the patronage cupboard bare for the Republicans of Democratic antecedents, if he could have managed it. Weed had traveled to Springfield in December to present to the President-elect his recommendations for appointments.[2] To counteract Weed's mission Stanton advised Carroll, David Dudley Field and Wadsworth to come to the capital to request senators to persuade Lincoln to make no appointments until he had conferred with men representing other factions. The Chase men, Stanton suggested, should then head for Springfield to confer with Lincoln personally.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, December 7, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. The favorite of Stanton and the radical Republicans, if a former Whig was to be selected for New York's cabinet post, was William Curtis Noyes, Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 30, 1860, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Harriet A. Weed (ed.), Life of Thurlow Weed Including His Autobiography and a Memoir (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884), I, 600-613.

On January 6 or 7, right after the arrival of Weed in Washington, Stanton learned that Lincoln had decided that Seward should have the post of Secretary of State, and that Seward was considering accepting. Moreover, it was rumored that Simon Cameron, the wealthy protectionist from Pennsylvania, had been promised a place, either the War or Treasury departments. The Treasury post Stanton wanted for Chase once the State Department seemed unavailable. He thought that the anti-Cameron Pennsylvanians, of whom there were many, the radical New Yorkers, and Senator Trumbull could exert enough influence to keep Cameron out of the Treasury and win that post for his favorite from Ohio.[2]

Lincoln, bound by an unauthorized agreement made by David Davis at the Wigwam to give Cameron a position in the cabinet, probably sincerely wanted Chase for the Treasury. He told Trumbull, who had pleaded the case for Chase, that he thought that Chase would be appointed to that job. He believed that such an appointment would be necessary to reconcile "Mr. Bryant and his class," that is the former

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, January 6, 1861, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 7, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Democrats, to the appointment of Seward.[1] Stanton implored Chase to take the Treasury Department if it were offered, claiming that it would be the most important post in the administration. "My dear friend," Stanton pleaded, "we must have some such men as you in the administration, or all is gone."[2]

Chase was called to Springfield by Lincoln. The President-elect asked him if he would accept the Treasury post if it were offered, but he was unwilling to assure Chase that it would be offered. Chase responded that he would not refuse the post out of pique over the appointment of Seward. The reply was ambiguous, but the implication was that he would accept when Lincoln made a definite offer.[3]

Opdyke, Barney and Hogeboom headed for Springfield to see Lincoln. They stopped at Columbus to confer with Chase and met the President-elect on January 16. They could not convince Lincoln that he should make the Chase appointment immediately. They returned to New York, where they induced Bryant and Greeley to write to Lincoln urging Chase's appointment.[4] Chase did finally receive the Treasury post--

---

[1] Horace White, The Life of Lyman Trumbull (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913), p. 145.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 7, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Albert B. Hart, Salmon Portland Chase (Vol. XXVIII of American Statesman Series. 40 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), pp. 202-203.

[4] Harry J. Carman and Reinhard Luthin, Lincoln and the Patronage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), pp. 35-36; Donnal V. Smith, "Salmon P. Chase and the Election of 1860," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (1930), 536.

Cameron was made Secretary of War--but he had no hand in the construction of the remainder of Lincoln's cabinet.[1]

Stanton was elated when he heard that it was likely that New England's place in the cabinet would go to the former Jacksonian Democrat, Gideon Welles, who had headed the Connecticut delegation to the 1860 Republican convention. He told Welles that such an appointment would give confidence to the Jeffersonians in the party, men "who believe that the grand object of government is not to enrich the few at the expense of the many but rather to secure the rights of all classes." With Welles and Chase in the cabinet, Stanton believed that the former Radical Democrats would get a hearing despite the presence in that advisory body of hostile elements.[2] Co-existence was possible as long as balance was maintained.

When the cabinet positions had been decided upon, the contest for subordinate positions began. The main contention between the former Free Soilers of New York and the Weed faction was over the distribution of federal jobs in the New York Port. Seward planned to score an early coup by securing the major offices before the opposition had organized its campaign. He ran into difficulty, however, with the two New York senators, Ira Harris and Preston King, neither of whom were Weed men. Early in March Lincoln held a meeting with Seward and the New York Senators. He informed them at once that the most important post, Collector of the Port, would go to Hiram Barney. Lincoln stressed that he was making the appointment on his own responsibility and from his personal knowledge of Barney's qualifications.[1] Whatever Lincoln's reasons for naming Barney may have been, no appointment could have pleased Chase more, for Barney was Chase's best political friend in New York.[2] The selection of the former Free Soiler was a rebuff to the Seward-Weed faction. Seward had no intention of losing the other major positions at the port. He presented a list to Lincoln of his candidates for the other posts. Gideon Welles, who had been invited by Lincoln to attend the conference, thereupon asked if the Treasury Secretary and Attorney General had been consulted on Seward's nominees. Seward replied that this was not necessary since they were New York appointments. Lincoln, however, agreed with Welles that department heads should be consulted about appointments in their domain.[3] Round one had gone to the former Democrats.

---

[1] Albert B. Hart, Salmon Portland Chase (Vol. XXVIII of American Statesman Series. 40 vols.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1899), pp. 205-206.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gideon Welles, January 7, 1861, Gideon Welles Papers, Illinois State Historical Society.

---

[1] Gidwon Welles, Lincoln and Seward (New York: Sheldon and Company, 1874), pp. 71-72.

[2] Weed recalled in his autobiography that Lincoln had told him in December of 1860 that he had decided to appoint Barney Collector. Harriet A. Weed (ed.), Life of Thurlow Weed Including His Autobiography and a Memoir (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1884), I, 612. If so, the appointment could hardly have resulted from a suggestion by Chase.

[3] Welles, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

Chase had little time to relish his success. No sooner had Barney's appointment been announced than the Secretary received a letter from Frederick Conkling, the Congressman in whose district the Custom House was located. Conkling informed Chase that he and his friends had to have the Surveyor of the Port appointed from their ranks. The "Surveyorship is of vital importance," he insisted; without it the Collectorship "will prove a barren scepter in our grasp." With the control of the patronage that would accrue from the two offices, the Republican Party in the state, for the ensuing four years, would be in the hands of "our friends."[1]

The anti-Weed men were united in their desire to have the Surveyorship. David Dudley Field, Horace Greeley, George Opdyke and James Wadsworth wrote directly to the President asking that the post be filled from their wing of the party. All of these men, with the possible exception of Greeley, wanted the post to be given to Henry B. Stanton. On the envelope containing these letters, Lincoln wrote, "Greeley, Opdycke [sic], Field and Wadsworth, in favor of having the two big puddings on the same side of the board."[2]

Stanton was extremely eager to secure the position of Surveyor. He had no intention of repeating the mistakes he had made in applying for a position eight years before. Then he had mentioned a number of positions that he would accept; in 1861 he was specifying only one. In 1853, Stanton had tried to secure a position from Pierce directly, but the New Hampshire Democrat had relied heavily on his cabinet and Senators for advice. In 1861 Stanton secured the support of United States Senator Ira Harris of New York, who wrote to the President on his behalf.[1] He also exerted all of the pressure he could muster on the Secretary of the Treasury. George Opdyke urged Chase to do everything in his power to place Stanton in the Surveyorship.[2] Lieutenant Governor Campbell of New York warned the Secretary of the dire consequences to the party if Stanton was not appointed.[3] Stanton urged his friend and former State Senate colleague, Thomas B. Carroll to get up a paper urging him and him alone for the post and to have it signed by Wadsworth, Field, Noyes, Dana, Campbell, Opdyke, Greeley, Carroll and, if possible, Frederick Conkling. Carroll had pressed for Stanton's appointment when he was in Washington, but Stanton urged him to return to the capital to reinforce his previous effort,[4] and to have David Dudley Field also go to Washington to exert his influence.[1] His appointment was crucial, Stanton told Carroll, and would "settle the destiny of Chase." He wrote: "My defeat is nothing to me personally--but on the test made as to whether Chase has power to control his own department and keep off Seward's interference, a defeat would be a heavy blow to him . . . to use Frank Blair's pungent phrase--'it would show that he was not worth boosting any higher.'"[2] Stanton urged Carroll to write to Chase presenting the points about his prestige and the opinion of prominent New Yorkers "whom Chase desires to serve and upon whose good opinion and services his future depends."[3]

---

[1] Frederick A. Conkling to Salmon P. Chase, March 12, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] "Memorandum: Appointment of Surveyor and Collector of the Port of New York," April 8, 1861, Ray Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), IV, 325.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, April 1, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] George Opdyke to Salmon P. Chase, April 4, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Richard Campbell to Salmon P. Chase, April 8, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, Sunday A.M., n.d., Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

Stanton, in a letter to the Treasury Secretary--Chase was too busy to see him personally--pulled out all of the stops. He assured Chase that as Surveyor he would promote harmony in the party and distribute the patronage fairly. He appealed to Chase's enormous ambition by pledging to use all the political influence of the position to "make your administration of the Treasury department successful and to promote your interests as leader of our party." He invoked Chase's pride by referring to the shame that he would bring upon himself if he were overruled in a matter concerning his own department. He mentioned influential Republicans within and without New York who were supporting his candidacy. He pointed out that the minor offices had already been given to the Weed wing of the party. He concluded by asking Chase to consult with the President fully before Lincoln reached a final decision.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, Friday, A.M., n.d., Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, Sunday A.M., n.d., Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, *ibid*.

Stanton was Chase's first choice for the Surveyorship. By the end of May, at least, Chase had decided to cease interfering and to leave the decision to the President.[2] Dismayed by Chase's torpid effort on his behalf, Stanton tried to induce the Navy Secretary to intercede. Gideon Welles had been a staunch Democrat until the slavery issue had pushed him into the Republican ranks. Stanton asked Welles to press his nomination for Surveyor since he, Stanton, was the only person "of democratic antecedents" proposed for the leading offices still unfilled. He also appealed to Welles's pride and his dislike of Seward and the influence Seward had with the President. "Can it be possible," Stanton queried, "that one member of the Cabinet is going to beat all the others?"[3]

Despite his efforts by June Stanton was out of the running.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, April 1, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Salmon P. Chase to Hiram Barney, May 29, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gideon Welles, n.d., Gideon Welles Papers, New York Public Library.

Chase, therefore, recommended Rufus Andrews, a New York Republican of American Party antecedents,[1] for Surveyor and he was selected by Lincoln. The cause of Stanton's failure is not definitely known. Elizabeth Cady Stanton's radical views on women's rights and marriage had been brought to the attention of the President.[2] It seems unlikely, however, that this was a major factor in the President's unwillingness to appoint Stanton as Surveyor. Lincoln probably thought it imprudent to place the "two big puddings on the same side of the board." Weed and Seward, whose candidate, Abram Wakeman, was denied the post, might have been greatly upset by the appointment of Stanton, not only because he was a Chase man, but because after declaring himself a Seward man before the Republican convention, he joined the Chase camp. Rufus Andrews was not obnoxious to them. The Chase men too were not disappointed by the appointment of Andrews. Barney expressed his gratification with the appointment.[3] Horace Greeley also liked Andrews, having recommended him for the post of District Attorney of New York in February.[4]

---

[1] Rufus Andrews to Salmon P. Chase, July 25, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Katharine Anthony, Susan B. Anthony, Her Personal History and Her Era (first edition; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Company, 1954), p. 216.

[3] Hiram Barney to Salmon P. Chase, July 24, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

[4] Ray Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press), IV, 325.

Stanton did receive, upon the recommendation of Hiram Barney, an appointment as Deputy Collector of the Custom House. This was a far less lucrative post than the one he had desired, and, although he accepted the appointment, he lived to regret it.

CHAPTER XIII

STANTON AND THE CRISIS OF THE UNION

On December 20, 1860, South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession. By January 12, 1861, four states had left the Union. Stanton, in Washington on business, heard the news and rumors that circulated in the nation's capital and thought that an equal number of states were preparing to follow suit and that nearly all of the slave states would have left by the time Lincoln took his oath of office. Washington was a city in commotion. Military forces were en route there to protect the public buildings and the seals of office from attack and plunder.[1] Stanton surmised that the country was in the midst of a revolution that would not be confined to the South. "I fear that prominent republicans and abolitionists will be victimized all thro' the North," he told his wife.[2] Elizabeth, with Susan B. Anthony, Reverend Samuel May, Stephen S. Foster and others of radical persuasion, was at the time touring New York State urging immediate abolition. The intrepid lecturers were received with hisses, boos, stamping, and threats of mob violence.[3] Stanton was naturally alarmed for Elizabeth's safety. A simple suggestion to desist would probably have elicited from Elizabeth a reference to Henry's defiance of mobs in the 1830's. Henry, therefore, told his wife that she was risking her life in useless endeavors. He contrasted the rioters of 1861 with their predecessors: "These rioters are not union-savers now, so much as of yore, but are rather secessionists, who desire to break up the Union. *Pray don't stand in their way*: for they are doing good work."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 12, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 12, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), pp. 119-120.

Henry Stanton's first reaction was to favor letting the Southern states go in peace, a position that had been held by Garrison for years. Stanton probably regarded secession as a legitimate exercise of the right of revolution. More important this revolution "was sweeping slavery to perdition." He told his wife that personal liberty bills would not be needed, since "half the Negroes will run away and there will be no fugitive slave law to stop them for there will be no Slave States in *our* Union."[2] Secession, at first glance, appeared to be a way to resolve heretofore insolvable problems: how to free one's self from the guilt of sustaining a nation that allowed slavery to exist within its borders; how to assist runaway slaves without violating the written law; how to free the slaves everywhere without subverting the federal system. Stanton was joined in his early acceptance of secession by Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Gerrit Smith, Frederick Douglass, John Greenleaf Whittier, and other prominent abolitionists.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 12, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, *ibid*.

However, Stanton knew that peacable secession was an impossibility. He told his wife in mid-January, "Civil War is close upon us."[2] As he pondered, he came to believe that a war which would destroy slavery was preferable to either disunion or compromise. The possibility that concessions might be made to the South upset Stanton. Strenuous efforts were being made, he told Gideon Welles in January, "to concede away all we have won and a good deal more."[3]

Stanton sensed that the hour of victory over slavery was fast arriving. He was willing to barter away none of the fruits of this victory. The Crittenden proposal, to protect slavery in the District of Columbia and the states, to colonize free Negroes, to prohibit slavery north of 36° 30' and protect it South of that line in all of the territories, was, to abolitionists, total surrender. The Crittenden resolution was attractive to less resolute Northerners, evoking memories of the Missouri Compromise which had endured for a generation. Stanton, however, had faith that the Republicans would not be duped into giving their support to any measure that would allow the perpetuation and extension of slavery.[1] Stanton's confidence was justified. Lincoln had no intention of yielding on the issue of slavery expansion, the heart of the Republican program, and the Crittenden proposal was defeated.[2] The last effort to avert war, a peace conference which met for three weeks in February but which was boycotted by eight southern states, was unable to arrive at anything but resolutions resembling the Crittenden plan. These were subsequently rejected by the Senate.[3] Stanton rejoiced, in a letter to his oldest son on Washington's Birthday, that Lincoln, when he took office, would recapture the federal forts, collect the revenue and enforce the laws throughout the land.[4]

---

[1] James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 31-38.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 12, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gideon Welles, January 7, 1861, Gideon Welles Papers, Illinois State Historical Library.

On March 4, Lincoln was inaugurated and five weeks later the Confederate batteries opened fire on Fort Sumter. In mid-April, Stanton prepared to leave Washington, then filling up with troops, to return to his family. He had been unable to collect some one thousand dollars that he had earned in the capital--money that was badly needed by his family. Nevertheless, he told his wife, "If we can only have a war that will destroy Slavery I shall be content to lose all the little I am worth."[1] Washington was a center of confusion. Soldiers swarmed throughout the city. Barracks were being built, cavalry units were parading, and fife and drums were sounding on all street corners. Stanton commented, "And me thinks above the general din I hear old John Brown knocking on the lid of his coffin and shouting 'let me out!'--The doom of slavery is at hand. It is to be wiped out in Blood. Amen."[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, January 7, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Allan Nevins, The Emergence of Lincoln (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1950), II, 394-402.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 411-412.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Daniel Cady Stanton, February 22, 1861, Theodore Stanton and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.), Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922), II, 87-88.

On the train from Washington, Stanton chatted with Stephen A. Douglas. The Little Giant was heading for Illinois to rally the people of his home state to the support of Lincoln and the Union.[3] When the train pulled into Baltimore, that city was under the control of a mob. Some of the men were armed with muskets stolen from the arsenal. The railroad tracks between Baltimore and Havre de Grace, where trains crossed the Susquehanna River, had been destroyed. A small party of travellers, Stanton included, hired a wagon to take them to Havre de Grace. They stopped to dine at Bel Air. When they emerged from the inn after their meal, the deputy sheriff of Harford

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, April 18, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Friday noon, n.d. [April 19?, 1861], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 212. Douglas died less than two months later.

County, whose wagon they had hired, was nowhere to be seen. In the courthouse nearby a tumultuous meeting was being held, while a rough crowd hung around the door. The meeting had been called to decide whether the county should go with the secessionists. The arrival of the Yankee travelers raised a side issue: should they be hanged or detained for examination? The interposition of the landlord or the sheriff secured permission for the strangers to depart. When the group arrived at Havre de Grace they learned that General Benjamin F. Butler had been there and had seized all of the ferryboats to transport the Massachusetts troops to Washington by way of Annapolis. When the Stanton party hired a rowboat to take them across the Susquehanna, half a dozen men tried to prevent their crossing. After a small scuffle, they were afloat, but they were the targets of musket fire, which, in the dusk of evening missed the mark. When they arrived at the railway depot on the other side of the river, the travellers came upon a Pennsylvania regiment which had just entered the city. Stanton conferred with the commander, giving what information he could on the situation in Baltimore and Washington and continued the journey home without incident.[1]

Advocate of Total War

Hostilities joined the abolitionists together as they had not been for twenty years. They had always been in agreement on ends, although disagreeing on appropriate means. Now the means were provided for destroying slavery. Southern violence had precipitated war. The abolitionists could choose only between self-defense and surrender. Even the most pacifistic chose self-defense. Stanton wanted the war to be prosecuted with vigor and "treason and rebellion crushed out in every State--Gulf States, as well as Border States," with no halfway measures.[1] War could achieve the destruction of slavery throughout the land. What Stanton feared was that too great a show of force at the outset by Northern armies might cause the border states to back down. This would cause a reaction in Congress and "some miserable compromise."[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 225-227.

For Henry B. Stanton "victory" and "abolition" were complementary terms. The Union could not (and should not) be saved without ending slavery. Slavery had been the cause of the malaise; no cure was conceivable short of its destruction. Abolition, of course, could not be achieved without military success. When General Benjamin Butler, in May of 1861, refused to return runaway slaves to their former masters and instead chose to regard them as contraband of war, Stanton was elated. He wrote a witty article for Greeley's Tribune in which he suggested that those who "hail the Dred Scott dicta as the perfection of judicial wisdom" must rejoice at the Butler's treatment of runaway slaves as captured property. After the war, wrote Stanton, the Negroes like other contraband, could not be given up to their former enemies. They must "be compelled to take care of themselves like other people."[1] Stanton thought that Butler's plan would abolish slavery, if the war were to last long enough.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Francis P. Blair, May 8, 1861, Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 7, 1861, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

And the war would be long, Stanton thought, because Southern leaders, "before they would submit, would consent to be bound hand and foot and ground to pummice under the car-wheels of our Northern railroads,"[3] an apt metaphor. Stanton anticipated dire consequences from the prolongation of the war, but he was willing to endure them, if slavery would be abolished in the process. With a long war, the United States would go deeper and deeper into debt, he predicted, and it might find itself "under the yoke of a *quasi* military despotism." Despite the possible pauperism of the populace and the need for a revolution to restore civil liberty, Stanton regarded it the nation's duty to crush the rebellion and destroy slavery by covering the South with Union soldiers and enlisting every able-bodied Negro into the

---

[1] *New York Daily Tribune*, May 29, 1861, p. 4. Henry B. Stanton identified as author in Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 30, 1861, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 30, 1861, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of October 28, 1863, *New York Daily Tribune*, October 29, 1863, p. 8.

Union ranks.[1] Stanton had told Salmon P. Chase in 1858: "I grow more radical in my hostility to Slavery as I grow older."[2] The war only intensified Stanton's animosity toward the institution which was the root cause of the fratracidal conflict. Stanton's pessimism was not reduced when the financial plight of the family sent him back to Washington in the summer of 1861 to scrape together some money "to satisfy the clamorous merchants of Seneca Falls." He told Elizabeth, "If I fail--! then I don't know what next."[3] The Washington that Stanton returned to was very unsettled. Rumors of an intended Confederate attack upon the city were circulating. Seventy thousand troops were defending the city, but Stanton observed that the morale of the soldiers was low. They were disorganized and complained of their treatment. "The truth is," he wrote to his wife, "the contractors and jobbers are making all the money they can at the expense of the soldiers. The scamps ought to be hung."[4]

When Stanton's appointment as Deputy Collector of the New York Port came through, he removed to New York City. In the spring of 1862, he moved his family from their ten acre estate in Seneca Falls to Brooklyn.[1] The following spring they moved into a four story house on West 45th Street in Manhattan between Fifth and Sixth Avenues.[2] Stanton had to relinquish the joys of gardening and adjust himself to urban living. The transition was eased by the opportunity to assist the cause to which he had devoted his life. In New York he would attempt to be public servant, party spokesman, journalist, lawyer, and father.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, n.d., Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, June 24, 1858, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, August 16, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, August 6, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Union Orator

Stanton employed his splendid oratorical powers on behalf of the Union and the Negro during the war. Garrison noted that Stanton spoke with the same eloquence that had distinguished his orations in the days of moral abolitionism.[3] Stanton shared the rostrum with such notables as George Opdyke, the mayor of New York City, Hiram Barney, William Curtis Noyes, William Cullen Bryant, David Dudley

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 3, 1862, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), p. 123.

[2] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, April 20, 1863, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Photograph of house, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] William L. Garrison to Helen Garrison, May 14, 1863, William L. Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library.

Field, John Cochrane, and Roscoe Conkling.[1] He worked with fellow members of the Loyal National League to promote loyalty to the Union cause in a city whose populace was divided over the expediency of vigorous prosecution of the war and was indifferent or hostile to the Negro.

Henry Stanton, in his addresses, did not minimize the sacrifices demanded by the war. He attempted to extol the objectives of the struggle, to characterize the war as a conflict between oligarchy and democracy. He sought to awaken in his hearers a sense of mission and to indicate the obligations which they, as citizens of a democratic republic had to assume for mankind. He told an audience in October of 1862:

> We are rolling up an appalling debt--we are sending the pride of our youth and the vigor of our manhood to the hospital and the grave--we are scourging ourselves with remorseless taxation, we are filling the land with blood and tears, in order to crush this diabolical Rebellion, and save our benign institutions from utter ruin, not for ourselves only, but for struggling humanity on this continent, and through all the world and for all time.[2]

---

[1] *Loyal Meeting of the People of New York to Support the Government, Prosecute the War, and Maintain the Union, Held at the Cooper Institute, Friday Evening, March 6, 1863* (New York: Nesbitt and Company, 1863), p. 1; *New York Daily Tribune*, October 8, 1862, p. 4; *Ibid*., March 20, 1863, p. 4; *Ibid*., March 21, 1863, p. 8.

[2] Henry B. Stanton speech, *New York Daily Tribune*, October 9, 1862, p. 8.

The Negro: Object as Agent

Henry Stanton solved the problem of identifying the main purpose of the Civil War by linking the interests of the Negroes with the salvation of the Union. In the city of New York this was probably the most expedient course of action. In fact, in the nation at large much of the zeal for emancipation was based upon the argument for military necessity rather than upon the concern for the Negro as a person. Some abolitionists balked at this,[1] but for the pragmatic Stanton, the outcome rather than the tactics employed was most important. While Stanton personally relished the Emancipation Proclamation as a step toward total emancipation, he carefully presented it to the audience as a blow at the Southern war effort. Lincoln, Stanton exclaimed, "has rolled slavery into one big, black bombshell and charging it full of Greek fire, has rammed it down the muzzle of a rifled martial Proclamation, which with his long-sighted eye, he will, on the first day of the coming year, aim strait [sic] at the heart of the Rebellion, blowing it back to its kindred hell--. . . ."[2]

Stanton was aware that the Proclamation in effect freed no one. If total abolition were to be secured, it was necessary to involve

---

[1] James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 90-91.

[2] Henry B. Stanton speech, New York Daily Tribune, October 9, 1862, p. 8.

Negroes in the war effort. A grateful North could not withhold emancipation. His pleas for Negro participation carefully suggested their usefulness to the war effort. Negroes could cripple the Confederacy by refusing to cut their master's crops; Negroes could labor for the Northern armies and when competent enter that army as soldiers. Negro troops, Stanton explained, would strike terror into the hearts of the white Southerners as Nat Turner's Rebellion and John Brown's raid had proved. This southern fear had to be exploited although the danger in this line of argument was apparent to Stanton. He was quick to point out that the Southern fear of the Negro was pathological. Negroes, Stanton reassured his listeners, were not cruel, but kind. "These Rebels," he asserted, "are not fit to be drowned in the tears of their slaves."[1]

Stanton's advocacy of the use of Negro troops encountered hostility from the workingmen of New York who feared economic competition from the freedmen. Stanton found a means to get around the issue. He told his critics that they had nothing to fear from the total abolition of slavery. Southern Negroes would stay in their section while Northern Negroes, presumably uncomfortable in a cold climate, would gravitate to a free South.[2] Thus climatic determinism would result in what was, from the perspective of the North, colonization. Stanton was implicitly confessing to himself that a response from the moral dimension--one that the Stanton of the 1830's would have made--would not banish fears emanating from economic considerations.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton speech, New York Daily Tribune, October 9, 1862, p. 8.

[2] Henry B. Stanton speech, New York Daily Tribune, September 6, 1862.

Stanton's hopes for Negro troops were fulfilled. By November of 1862 the first Negro regiment had been mustered into service, to be followed by nearly sixty more within a year. The courage and determination of the Negroes enlisted in the cause proved the wisdom of the plan. Stanton paid a glowing tribute to all of the colored troops in October of 1863 and expressed his hope that they would be organized everywhere.[1] Never before had a plan which Stanton had supported worked quite so perfectly. The Union cause was aided and public sentiment was changed until it eventually resulted in amendments to the Constitution making Negroes free men, citizens and voters.

Radical Politics

Stanton believed that winning the war depended upon the success of the Republican Party, particularly its radical wing. In New York the two factions of the party contended for control. In the gubernatorial election year of 1862 the radical wing, many of whom had been Democrats, favored James Wadsworth, the former Barnburner, to head the state ticket. Thurlow Weed, leading the other group, the bulk of whom were former Whigs, opposed Wadsworth and sought to prevent the inclusion in the party platform of any resolution espousing emancipation of the slaves. Weed thought that emphasis on that issue might cost the party the election. New York voters were not as far advanced as the radical faction on the slavery question, Weed believed, and should not be alienated.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of October 28, New York Daily Tribune, October 29, 1863, p. 8.

The radical Republicans made judicious use of the patronage at their disposal, labored diligently for Wadsworth and secured his nomination. They so dominated the convention that no compromise with Weed was necessitated. The platform accepted by the party called for the abolition of slavery throughout the land.[2] Stanton campaigned vigorously for his friend Wadsworth. He presented the election as a contest between the supporters of the Union and the partisans of the Confederacy. He suggested that the Democratic nominee, Horatio Seymour, for whom he had campaigned in former days, was treading a fine line between treason and loyalty. Seymour, Stanton maintained, was supported by men who wanted to cripple the administration to prevent a vigorous prosecution of the war.[3]

---

[1] Thurlow Weed to John Bigelow, December 19, 1862, John Bigelow, Retrospections of an Active Life (Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1909-1913), I, 580-581; and Henry Greenleaf Pearson, James S. Wadsworth of Geneseo (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913), pp. 154-155, 158.

[2] Harry J. Carman and Reinhard Luthin, Lincoln and the Patronage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), p. 244.

[3] Henry B. Stanton speech, New York Daily Tribune, October 9, 1862, p. 8.

To secure the aid of a skillful campaigner, Stanton wrote to John Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary, to plead that General John Cochrane, then commanding the First U. S. Chasseurs, be relieved of his duty and sent to New York to speak for Wadsworth. Stanton explained the emergency to Nicolay: "We shall be very hard pressed in this state--very. If New York is lost, all is gone. The battle pending here is of more consequence than that which seems about to be fought on the Potomac."[1] Cochrane's return cheered Stanton, who, although believing that five-sixths of the voters who had gone to war would have cast their ballots for Wadsworth, still thought that the Republicans were strong enough to elect their gubernatorial candidate.[2] Stanton was wrong. Seymour's victory over Wadsworth vexed the radical Republicans in the state who believed that many former Whigs had deserted the party to insure the election of Seymour.[3] Wadsworth believed that Weed had wanted him to win, but that Seward had crushed him in revenge for Wadsworth's opposition to Seward's nomination at Chicago in 1860.[4] Whatever the causes of the defeat of Wadsworth were, Weed's power in the Republican Party of New York and the nation was strengthened.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John Nicolay, October 17, 1862, Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, October 22, 1862, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] O. Follett to Salmon P. Chase, March 9, 1864; John Jay to Salmon P. Chase, October 6, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; Roscoe C. E. Brown, History of the State of New York, Political and Governmental, ed. Ray B. Smith (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1922), I, 36.

[4] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 216.

In New York City, the anti-war Democrats were strong. Tension mounted in the bitterly divided city throughout 1862 and the first half of 1863. Disillusionment with the conduct of the war, the desire for peace and partisan political rivalries created an electric atmosphere. In June of 1863, the Democratic mayor, Fernando Wood, sponsored a meeting in Cooper Union which called for immediate peace and urged Democrats to repudiate the war.[1] Governor Horatio Seymour's attacks upon the Lincoln administration added to the tension. The draft call, commenced on July of 1863, provided the spark which set off a riot of alarming proportions in New York City. Mobs plundered homes and stores, battled with the police and killed scores of persons. The special objects of violence were the Negroes of the city. A gang sacked and then burned a colored orphanage two blocks from the Stanton home and marauded through the neighborhood. Since the Stantons were known to be outspoken radicals, Elizabeth feared an assault upon their home. She sent the servants and the children to the fourth floor, instructing them to run out onto the roof and into a neighboring house in case of attack. Elizabeth then wrote an appeal to the mob "as Americans and citizens of a republic," which she intended to deliver if necessary. Fortunately a squad of police and two companies of soldiers arrived upon the scene, and after a bloody fray, succeeded in putting down the disturbance. The Stantons and their guest, Susan B. Anthony, nevertheless, spent a night at Elizabeth's sister's home.[1]

---

[1] Wood Gray, The Hidden Civil War, The Story of the Copperheads (Compass Books edition; New York: Viking Press, 1964), pp. 146-147.

During the bloody riots which lasted for three days, Neil, the oldest Stanton child, then twenty-one years of age, was seized by a mob. His life in danger, he led his captors into a saloon where he bought everyone drinks and led a toast to Jeff Davis. This secured his freedom. Neil, it seems, had inherited his father's talent for the expedient response, but lacked the Stanton courage. Elizabeth, although aware that his deception probably saved his life, thought it would have been far nobler had he died in defiance of the tyranny of mob law.[2]

The combined efforts of police, militia and army units quelled the disturbance. New York returned to its normal condition of smoldering unrest.

Patriots and Copperheads throughout the North, although for different reasons, were discontented with the course of events in this most calamitous period of the nation's history. Stanton had been for a long time dismayed by the lack of leadership and the failure of the administration to pursue the war with vigor.[1] When Stanton visited Washington early in 1863, he thought that the nation was well on its way to ruin. He found the army almost in a state of mutiny for want of pay and the lack of leadership.[2] In 1864 he commented to Gerrit Smith on the chronic laxity of the administration in calling up troops when needed.[3] Stanton had been particularly irked by the reluctance of the President to enlist the aid of Negroes in the war effort. Not only had the nation been deprived of soldiers by the inaction of the President and Congress, but such inaction had revealed a startling lack of awareness of what the war was all about. Simon Cameron's annual report to Congress, drawn up late in 1861, had advocated the arming of freed slaves. Lincoln, despite advice to the contrary from Chase and Welles, ordered Cameron to remove the section of his report, although it had already been printed in some Northern newspapers.[4] Stanton had been shocked and dismayed at Lincoln's action.[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Nancy Smith, n.d. [1863] in Alma Lutz, Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902 (New York: John Day Company, 1940), p. 128.

[2] Ibid.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, January 7, 1862, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; and Alma Lutz, Susan B. Anthony, Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 104.

[2] Ida H. Harper, The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony (Indianapolis: The Hollenback Press, 1898), I, 226.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 18, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[4] Allan Nevins, The War for the Union (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959), I, 401-402; and Louis M. Starr, Reporting the Civil War, the Bohemian Brigade in Action, 1861-1865 (Collier edition; New York: Crowell-Collier, 1962), p. 60.

During the spring of 1863, Henry and Elizabeth Stanton traveled to Washington where they consulted with Secretary of the Treasury, Salmon P. Chase. Samuel Wilkeson, Elizabeth's brother-in-law, who was Washington correspondent of the New York Tribune, arranged a meeting for them with the President.[2] They had a long talk with Lincoln, who told some "great stories" and impressed Mrs. Stanton as being a stronger man than she had imagined him to be from his official acts. Despite this, dubious about Lincoln's intentions toward the Negro, the Stantons did not favor his nomination for a second term.[3]

Stanton's position as a government office-holder prevented his making any public criticisms of the President. When fraud in his division of the New York Custom House forced his resignation,[4] in December of 1863, this limitation on the free expression of his views was removed. Moreover, what Stanton regarded as unfair treatment accorded to him during the investigation of the scandal, did nothing to endear the Lincoln administration to him.[5]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, December 4, 1861, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Louis M. Starr, Reporting the Civil War, the Bohemian Brigade in Action, 1861-1865 (Collier edition; New York: Crowell-Collier, 1962), p. 264.

[3] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 6, 1863, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University; Alma Lutz, Susan B. Anthony, Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), p. 104.

[4] See Chapter XIV.

[5] See Chapter XV.

Both Elizabeth and Henry Stanton joined the anti-Lincoln faction of anti-slavery men, led by the out-spoken Wendell Phillips, and supported by George Julian, Lyman Trumbull, Thomas B. Carroll, Frederick Douglass, William Goodell, Parker Pillsbury, Henry Ward Beecher and other prominent radicals.[1]

Disillusionment with Lincoln was not uncommon among stalwart abolitionists. The announcement of his mild reconstruction program in December of 1863, only intensified their distrust. Elizur Wright thought that the achievements of the administration with regard to the race issue would have been much in peace but not in war.[2] Wright cogently presented the nature of abolitionist discontent when he told Smith, "I dare not call Pres. Lincoln either honest or loyal. He is fighting for the exclusive privilege of white men under a Constitution made for all men. . . . I cannot see the use of protracting this agony by reelecting Lincoln."[3]

Many of the radicals wanted Salmon P. Chase, with his long and unblemished anti-slavery record, to become the Republican standard-bearer. When news of the campaign to replace Lincoln with his Secretary of the Treasury was released prematurely, the Chase boom collapsed and the radicals had to seek elsewhere for a candidate. They chose John C. Fremont, the dashing and romantic figure, whose radical policy toward slaveholders when he was at St. Louis as a commander of the Department of the West, had provoked Lincoln and caused Fremont's transfer. Fremont seemed just the sort of man to take advantage of the revolutionary times to lead a country to make fundamental changes in accord with the long-neglected principles of its first revolution. In New York a Central Fremont club was formed which condemned the vacillating policy of the administration in the conduct of the war and called Lincoln's conciliatory reconstruction program "treachery to justice, freedom and genuine Democratic principles."[1] The club called for the suppression of the rebellion without the infringement of civil liberties, the confiscation of rebel land, the extinction of slavery by constitutional amendment, and the guarantee of "absolute equality" of all men before the law.[2]

---

[1] Wendell Phillips to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, August 22 [1864], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; New York Daily Tribune, June 1, 1864, p. 5; Allan Nevins, Fremont, Pathmarker of the West (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), pp. 104-105; William E. Smith, The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics (New York: Macmillan Company, 1933), II, 263; James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 260-268.

[2] Elizur Wright to Gerrit Smith, August 19, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[3] Elizur Wright to Gerrit Smith, August 13, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Elizabeth Stanton gave her full support to the Fremont movement, declaring that it had "lifted politics into the sphere of morals and religion. . . ."[1] A convention of the supporters of Fremont was held on May 31 in Cleveland. John Cochrane, a lawyer, former Democrat and good friend of Henry Stanton, was chosen as president of the convention and after Fremont's nomination for the Presidency on the Radical Democratic ticket, Cochrane was made the Vice Presidential candidate. Thomas B. Carroll, Stanton's former New York Senate colleague and close friend, headed the committee that wrote the Radical Democratic platform, calling for uncompromising victory in the war, the abolition of slavery by constitutional amendment, the confiscation and re-distribution of rebel land, a guarantee of equality before the law to all men, and a thorough reconstruction of the South under the control of Congress.[2]

---

[1] "A Call to the Radical Men of the Nation," New York Daily Tribune, May 24, 1864, p. 5.

[2] Ibid.; "To the People," New York Daily Tribune, May 18, 1864, p. 4.

On June 7, the Baltimore Convention of the Republican Party unanimously renominated Lincoln and adopted a resolution pledging the party to support a Constitutional amendment which would abolish slavery. The Fremont movement had failed to influence the Republican Party in the selection of its candidate although it may have guaranteed the inclusion of the emancipation resolution. An attempt by the Fremont men to achieve union with the War Democrats came to nought. The effort to induce the Republicans to replace Lincoln was quietly dropped when war-weariness and defeatism were dissolved by the news of Sherman's capture of Atlanta. On September 17, Fremont withdrew from the race.[1]

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Central Fremont Club, May 14, 1864, New York Daily Tribune, May 18, 1864, p. 4.

[2] New York Daily Tribune, June 1, 1864, p. 4.

If the Democratic candidate, George McClellan, were to have been elected in 1864, all hopes for the fulfillment of the abolitionists' program would have vanished. Stanton had no alternative but to vote for Lincoln. He refused, however, to campaign for the incumbent, secure in the belief that Lincoln would win by a large majority.[2] Lincoln did score a handsome victory, receiving four hundred thousand more votes than his opponent. Some hope remained that Lincoln could be induced to at least compromise with the radicals. The Senate had approved the proposed amendment to abolish slavery in April of 1864. In January of the following year the House gave its approval. Moreover, the rebellion was hastening toward its conclusion. On the ninth of April, 1865, General Lee surrendered to Grant. The national joy that followed the great event at Appomattox Courthouse faded within a week as the nation mourned its fallen President, the victim of a desperate assassin. The abolitionists naturally shared in the grief. Nevertheless, the hardening of the Northern opinion toward the South that followed Booth's deplorable crime augured well for the continuation of the revolution that might yet achieve all that the abolitionists had hoped for. The new President was believed to be more radical than Lincoln.[1]

---

[1] James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 271-284.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, n.d., Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

The Counter-Revolution

The abolitionist honeymoon with Andrew Johnson was short-lived. Before long it became clear that their communion with the Tennessee Jacksonian had resulted from mutual expediency rather than agreement on principle. Johnson was the Southern analogue of the Free Soil Republicans who had cooperated with abolitionists out of concern for the status of free white men. Johnson was concerned with breaking the power of the planter aristocracy. His enormous vanity, however, was satisfied by the humiliation of his adversaries before him as they begged for pardons. Planter deference was an acknowledgment of his eminence and facilitated his capture by his former enemies. The President granted pardons liberally, dropped the program of land confiscation and accepted with equanimity the capture of the southern governments established in accord with his program. Johnson was made the agent of a counter-revolution engineered by those same elements that had led the South in ante-bellum days. The unconverted South commenced to consign the freedmen to a position somewhere between slavery and freedom.[2]

---

[1] James M. McPherson, The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964), pp. 314-315.

[2] Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 50-82.

Stanton was well aware of the menace to the abolitionists' quest for equality for the Negro. Johnson's policies had paved the way for an effort by Seward to advance his plans for a powerful national conservative party. Stanton believed that unless the radicals acted with dispatch, the conservatives within the Republican Party would gain control of that organization and render it useless as an agent for achieving justice for the Negro. In New York Seward's allies had, at the Syracuse Convention of 1865, endorsed Johnson's Reconstruction policies and voted down approval of a plank calling for Negro suffrage in the Empire State. Stanton feared that unless the party was taught a lesson in state elections in 1865 the conservatives throughout the North would undercut the radicals and cripple their efforts in Congress to undo the mischief that had been perpetrated with the acquiescence of Johnson.[1] Stanton's plan for the withholding of radical votes from the Republicans was not carried out. His fear that a coalition of "northern Copperheads and Southern rebels" would succeed to power and undo all of the accomplishments of the Republicans[2] was not for the time being to be realized.

The Congress that convened in December of 1865 refused to admit the representatives of the Johnson government and formulated their own play for Reconstruction. Stanton agreed with the radicals in

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, September 22, 1865, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, ibid.

Congress that the southern states had to pay a price for their rebellion. He believed that legally the rebellion had put the seceding states completely at the mercy of the federal government which could, if it desired "erase every such State, as body politic, from the map of the Union" and hang the traitors, who, he said, were nine-tenths of the South. Anything short of this was a gratuity. Morally, Stanton believed, there was no reason for the North to welcome back their wayward fellow countrymen. The prodigal son story, which had been employed to justify a policy of concilation, was inappropriate. In the Bible story the errant youth humbled himself, confessed his sin and asked to be treated like a hired servant. In contrast, the Southerners, Stanton told an abolitionist audience, wanted to come back as guests invited to a feast, slapping Uncle Sam on the back and sitting down to a dinner served by Wade, Butler, Colfax, Phillips, Greeley, Seward, Grant and Johnson.[1] The prerequisite for reunion to Stanton was the guarantee of full equality for the Negro.

Negro Suffrage

To Stanton the vital element in Reconstruction was Negro suffrage. He had always espoused this on moral grounds. Negro suffrage was a concomitant of his belief that skin color was unrelated to either natural ability or natural rights. Yet the only grounds upon which the male Negro could be denied the franchise was that of skin color.[1] Henry Stanton denied that anyone had the authority to determine another person's capacity to vote intelligently. The voters of New York, he remarked at an abolitionist gathering, chose rulers who could not tell the Constitution from the Koran. Nevertheless their right to choose was inalienable.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of November 23, 1866 to Pennsylvania Anti-Slavery Society, National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866, p. 1; also in The Independent [New York], December 27, 1866, p. 4.

cR5

The veteran anti-slavery Congressman from Ohio, Joshua Giddings, had referred to Negro suffrage in 1860, as a "doubtful issue," stating that the franchise was not a right, and classing Negroes in the same position as women and children: protected without the vote. Stanton seethed. He suggested that Giddings study the equality phrase of the Declaration of Independence which he had insisted be inserted in the Republican platform of 1860.[3] Without the vote, Stanton insisted, equality was impossible. Giddings, he charged, would raise the Negro from the bottom of the well as long as he didn't stand on terra firma. The vote was essential if the Negro was going to secure the rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.[1] Stanton regarded the Negro ballot as currency with which its possessor could purchase all else. The vote was the medium of exchange to which the politicians catered. Without it the Negro could be reduced to a servile status.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to The Principia [New York], December 15, 1860, p. 450.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of November 23, 1866, National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866, p. 1.

[3] Giddings had walked out of the Wigwam when his motion was denied. George William Curtis, however, had succeeded in inducing the Republican delegates to reverse their position. Allan Nevins, The Nomination of Abraham Lincoln: New Forces and New Men, an Address Delivered at the Chicago Historical Society on May 18, 1860 (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1960), p. 6.

Freedom to Henry Stanton was a synonym for self-government. When white Americans used the word they meant not only that they were not the property of other individuals, but that they participated in making the laws by which they were governed. All men who were citizens earned the right to the suffrage at birth, payable at maturity. The Republican Party, Stanton believed, should not resist "the onward march of universal suffrage in this country."[3] He appealed to his audiences not to forsake a race that had "baptized the national banner with their blood." Moreover, Stanton argued, the Republican Party needed Negro votes to survive. The seven hundred thousand votes that would accrue to the party from this source would change it from a minority to a majority party.[1] The Democrats had been the great ruling party, he said, because of their national appeal. The Republicans would have to be more than a sectional party if they were to compete.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to The Principia [New York], December 15, 1860, p. 450.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of November 23, 1866, National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866, p. 1.

[3] Ibid.

Although the proposed Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution did incorporate principles of equality for which the abolitionists had fought for thirty-five years, Stanton, like most abolitionists, was discontented with the measure which had received the approval of Congress in June of 1866, because it did not provide for Negro suffrage. However, Stanton departed from most radicals in believing that in one respect the measure was too harsh on the South. Consistent with his belief in universal suffrage, Stanton opposed Section Three of the amendment which disqualified ex-Confederates who at one time had sworn to uphold the Constitution from holding federal or state offices. To proscribe candidates was to restrict the right of free choice. Not only was this unjust in the abstract, but also a punishment of white Southerners that would create antagonisms and thus work to the disadvantage of the freedmen. Stanton summarized his objections to the Fourteenth Amendment when he said that it had "too much vengeance for enemies and too little regard for friends."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton speech, November 23, 1866, National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866, p. 1. Stanton did not mean to suggest that the Negro vote should be a block manipulated by the Republicans, see Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 5, 1871, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University. This would be a denial of the right of self-government rather than an affirmation of it.

[2] Stanton did not anticipate the loyalty to the Republican party in the Northwest which would secure its majority position without the help of Southern votes. The Republicans would and did abandon the Negro without losing their majority position, see Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 211-213.

The unique--for an abolitionist--aspect of Stanton's 1866 attitude toward Reconstruction was his desire not to alienate white Southerners. There is no doubt that he sympathized with the intentions of the Congressional radicals. Nevertheless, it must have become increasingly clear to him that the success of the radical governments in the South rested upon the presence of troops and the disfranchisement of substantial numbers of white voters. Whether Stanton expressed any opposition to the radical policy is not known. He certainly had doubts about its expediency. In 1866 he had asserted that Wendell Phillips' plan to treat the South as unorganized territory would not work.[2] It is likely that he regretted the drift of events but held his tongue in the hope that the radicals would get around to guaranteeing to the Negro the right to vote.[3] This they did with the Fifteenth Amendment, adopted in 1870.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of November 23, 1866, National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866, p. 1.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, in a speech of November 22, 1866, ibid.

[3] Stanton approved of the Radical governments sufficiently to secure for his oldest son, Neil, a position under the Warmoth regime in Louisiana. "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 94, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

End of Reconstruction

With the approval by the states of the Fifteenth Amendment, Stanton regarded Reconstruction as having accomplished its objectives.[1] There seemed to be no doubt in Stanton's mind that the Civil War amendments, if they remained in the Constitution, would be enforced. Stanton had great respect for law and the Constitution and apparently believed that the Southerners had no less reverence for the fundamental law. Perhaps he took the rhetoric of Calhoun and his latter-day apostles too seriously. They had objected to the Republican interpretation of the Constitution but had avowed their loyalty to the document. These amendments, Stanton probably thought, had removed all ambiguity about the rights of Negroes. What Stanton feared was not that the intention of Congress would be thwarted but that the Southerners would, with their northern allies in the Democratic Party, repeal the Civil War amendments. He concluded that the preservation of the amendments required their acknowledgment by the Democrats which could be secured only through a policy of conciliation toward the South.[2]

---

[1] Stanton did not waver from this view, Henry B. Stanton to Robert Purvis and Daniel Neall, December 1, 1883, Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Thomas S. Dands and Company, 1884), p. 63. Stanton outlasted William Lloyd Garrison by two amendments or four years; Garrison thought that his work had been completed with the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment, Russel B. Nye, William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers (The Library of American Biography, ed. Oscar Handlin. 19 vols.; Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955), pp. 184-187.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 4, 1871, open letter in The World [New York], May 5, 1871, p. 2; Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 5, 1871, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Stanton's anxiety to win over the Democracy was undoubtedly reinforced by the frauds of the Grant administration. Stanton had early been a Grant supporter.[1] Corruption North and South doubtless embittered him. Moreover, the nature of the Republican Party had changed. Having prepared the way for the triumph of the urban-industrial social order, it ceased functioning as a dynamic reform agency. A new set of Republican leaders had emerged to replace the reformers who had supplied the energy for the party's creative phase.[2] These leaders, Stanton believed, were "selfish politicians," who were "psuedo friends of the Negro," wanting to control his vote while not caring for his well-being.[3] The Republican Party was no longer an appropriate base for radicals like George Julian, Lyman Trumbull, Salmon P. Chase, Carl Schurz, Charles Sumner and Henry B. Stanton.

By 1871 Stanton was disillusioned with Federal efforts on behalf of the Negro. Much as he abhorred the outrages committed by the Ku Klux Klan, he feared the tyranny of the central government more. He thought that the national government had no authority under the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to usurp the police powers of the state as he believed they were doing with the three Enforcement Acts of

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Elihu Washburne, October 21, 1867, Washburne Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965), pp. 187-191.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 4, 1871, open letter in The World [New York], May 5, 1871, p. 2.

1870-1871. Stanton's ire was particularly aroused by the Ku Klux Act of April, 1871. This allowed the President to suspend the writ of habeas corpus where necessary to suppress armed combinations which were depriving Negroes of their civil rights. Stanton greatly feared that traditional liberties might be subverted. He told Gerrit Smith that he thought that the Ku Klux Klan marauders should be imprisoned or hanged, but added, "I object to cutting these amendments into strings to hang them with."[1]

Stanton had strong convictions on this subject and expressed them in an open letter to Gerrit Smith which was published in the New York *World*.[2] That paper had been calling for a "New Departure" by the Democratic Party, namely, an endorsement of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.[3] If that party could be brought around to adopt this position, Stanton reasoned, the amendments would be secure. He did not see that their acceptance did not guarantee their enforcement.

Many radicals, both for reasons similar to those of Stanton and for additional personal reasons, joined an anti-Grant Liberal Republican movement. Horace Greeley became the candidate of the Liberal

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 5, 1871, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, May 4, 1871, *The World* [New York], May 5, 1871, p. 2.

[3] James M. McPherson, "Grant or Greeley? The Abolitionist Dilemma in the Election of 1872," *American Historical Review*, LXXI (1965), 48.

Republicans against Grant and was endorsed by the Democrats. Frederick Conkling, John Cochrane, Reuben Fenton and Chauncey Depew of the New York party joined such political anti-slavery men as Carl Schurz, Charles Sumner, George Julian, and Lyman Trumbull in support of Greeley. Since 1869, Horace Greeley, in his New York Tribune, had been leading the drive for amnesty for the South. Greeley's theory was that Reconstruction could be successful only through the cooperation of reputable southern whites with radicals, north and south. Such cooperation depended upon amnesty to the former Confederates and political *laissez-faire* policy on the part of the national government. The alternative to amnesty, as Greeley saw it, was the polarization of Negroes and whites in the Republican and Democratic Parties respectively. Amnesty, on the other hand, would foster cooperation with the North and protection of the freedmen.[1] Stanton, anxious to secure civil liberties, to avoid the expansion of power by the federal government, to secure from white Southerners acquiescence in the Civil War amendments, and to bring sectional hostilities to a close, supported Greeley in 1872.[2]

---

[1] James M. McPherson, "Grant or Greeley? The Abolitionist Dilemma in the Election of 1872," American Historical Review, LXXI (1965), 44-45.

[2] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 20, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library. Whether Stanton regarded himself as a Liberal Republican or Democrat in 1872 is not known. His nephew recalled that he had become a Democrat in that year, but he may have equated support of Greeley with support of the Democracy. If not nominally a Democrat, in 1872, Stanton became one within the next few years.

Most of the old-time abolitionists did not share Stanton's view of affairs. Three-fourths of these abolitionists supported Grant's bid for re-election, believing that former slaveholders could not be given authority to determine what rights of the Negroes would be protected.[1] However, a number of staunch Negrophiles, like Anna Dickinson, Oliver Johnson, Elizur Wright, Theodore Tilton and Franklin B. Sanborn joined Stanton in backing the Liberal Republican-Democratic candidate,[2] who was soundly thrashed in the electoral college, although defeated by only 300,000 popular votes.

When the Democratic Party accepted Greeley and the Civil War amendments, Stanton thought that his work had been completed for the Negro. As he wrote in his memoirs shortly before his death: "For nearly forty years I 'fought it out on that line,' till I saw the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments incorporated into the Constitution, and Horace Greeley the regular Democratic candidate for president, when I was ready to say with one of old, 'Now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace, . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.'"[3] No more did Henry B. Stanton concern himself with the condition of the oppressed race to which he had devoted so many years.[1]

---

[1] James M. McPherson, "Grant or Greeley? The Abolitionist Dilemma in the Election of 1872," American Historical Review, XLLI (1965), 43-45.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper Brothers, 1887), p. 47.

Stanton's Errors

Stanton's errors were intellectual rather than moral, but they should have been avoided. His primary mistake was to ignore the proclivity of Southern whites for violence and extra-legal or illegal activity. Certainly his speeches for four decades had alluded to this characteristic. In assuming that the substance and the spirit of the Civil War amendments would be obeyed, he ignored the deep race prejudice which existed in both the North and the South. Yet he had all along been cognizant of this prejudice. Stanton also placed too great a reliance on the Negroes' power to achieve full equality in the political sphere. Finally Stanton failed to grasp the significance of the economic and educational disabilities of the freedmen. He was a prisoner of his belief that free men would be able to pull themselves up by their own bootstraps, failing to comprehend that slavery had robbed the Negro of the bootstraps themselves. Encumbered by his own Constitutional conservatism, Stanton could see no legal way to continue the revolution, yet his forty years of labor in the cause of Negro rights should not be forgotten; he had advanced the cause greatly. A century later another generation would have to renew the crusade. The grand amendments were to be its chief weapons.

---

[1] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 21, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library.

CHAPTER XIV

STANTON ACCUSED OF FRAUD

On October 13, 1863 two New York newspapers, The Times and The World, ran articles revealing that fraud had been uncovered at the Custom House in New York. The World informed its readers that a prominent deputy, a member of the Loyal League and "bosom friend of Hiram Barney" had been arrested. The official, The World explained, had been charged with "conniving with the enemies of his country" by cancelling bonds for large amounts of money, thereby facilitating illegal trade.[1] The deputy referred to, thought not by name, was Henry B. Stanton. The Times also said that a Deputy Collector had been arrested, but blamed the frauds on Copperheads in the Custom House.[2]

Stanton had not been arrested nor accused of wrongdoing, but was shocked by these charges, which were based partly on fact and partly on unsubstantiated rumors. His department at the Custom House was under investigation by the Solicitor of the Treasury, who had obtained proof that bonds, securities against illicit shipment of goods, had been abstracted, illegally removed from an office under Stanton's supervision.

The Times of November 1 corrected its original report, admitting that Stanton had not been arrested and claiming that he had been ignorant of the abstraction of bonds.[1] The Tribune, which had ignored the original rumor, explained on November 3 that the statements that had appeared in the rival newspapers had been incorrect, that no evidence indicated the complicity of Stanton in the frauds.[2] Greeley's journal, in fact, vouched for Stanton's character: "No one who knows Mr. S. will believe that he has either done or connived at any fraud or intentional wrong. . . . Mr. Stanton has been widely known these twenty years as a citizen of blameless repute and a lawyer of decided ability. He is of the sort of men who need office neither to confer distinction nor to secure them a livelihood."[3]

---

[1] The World [New York], October 31, 1863, p. 1.

[2] The New York Times, October 31, 1863, p. 5.

Despite disclaimers, the rumors spread. The Albany Atlas, a Democratic journal which had been friendly to Stanton in Barnburner days, held Stanton responsible for allowing munitions of war to reach enemy lines.[4] The pro-Democratic Herald claimed that Stanton had been "privy to the abstraction of certain bonds." It made use of the issue to lampoon Secretary of the Treasury Chase in particular and the government in general.[5]

---

[1] The New York Times, November 1, 1863, p. 3.

[2] New York Daily Tribune, November 3, 1863, p. 1.

[3] New York Daily Tribune, November 7, 1863, p. 6.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, November, n.d., 1863, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[5] New York Herald, November 11, 1863, p. 6.

The day after the story broke, Stanton wrote to Chase, imploring him as an "old friend" to counter the "grossly false and cruel statements" in the newspapers by sending an authorized telegram to the Associated Press contradicting the charges. Stanton implied that another party was guilty of the wrongdoing.[1] This person, Chase learned from the Solicitor of the Treasury, was Neil Stanton, who had served as a clerk in his father's department.[2] Neil's guilt, Stanton told his close friend, Thomas B. Carroll, was an embarrassing feature which impeded his self-vindication.[3]

When Chase did not lend his assistance, Henry Stanton assumed his own defense. He wrote an open letter to the Secretary which was printed in the Times and the Tribune. In it he proclaimed that he had neither participated nor been aware of any wrongdoing, and claimed that in the cancellation of bonds he had acted within "the liberal spirit of the instructions of the Treasury Department." Having overcome his reluctance to involve Neil, Henry Stanton declared that his son had admitted surrendering from six to eight bonds to the agents of shippers who had given bond.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 1, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Edward Jordan to Salmon P. Chase, October 27, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, November n.d., 1863, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[4] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, November 5, 1863 in The New York Times, November 6, 1863, p. 8 and New York Daily Tribune, November 6, 1863, p. 3.

John Cochrane, whom Stanton hired as his counsel, travelled to Washington to visit Chase and reported the Secretary's displeasure over the open letter. Stanton thereupon wrote to Chase to explain. He said that he had assumed that the charges made in the press, which had been "stimulated by a Custom House official," had been based on testimony presented to Solicitor Jordan. Had he been allowed to see this testimony, he said, he would not have been compelled to write the letter but could have exonerated himself in short order.[1]

Origins of the Inquiry

Stanton had assumed his position as Deputy Collector at the Custom House at the end of August, 1861. He had been given charge of the bond division immediately and had also been assigned to the Law Department. Later he had been given charge of seizures as well. In May of 1863 Stanton ceased to have charge of seizures in order that he might devote more time to the work of the Ninth, or bond, Division.[2] The main responsibility of the Ninth Division was the taking of bonds required by law and Treasury Department regulations on shipments to domestic and foreign ports. To understand Stanton's responsibilities, a brief account of procedures at the Custom House is necessary:

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, December 16, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 186-187.

After a ship was loaded at the New York Port under the supervision of the Surveyor, the ship's manifest, showing the name of the vessel and of the owner or master, the destination, and a list of the cargo with its value, would be taken to the Fourth Division, headed by Deputy Collector George Embree. After receiving an oath from the owner or master that the manifest was correct, Embree would examine the cargo list, immediately denying shipment to contraband articles or other articles that, in his judgment, would be used to aid the rebellion. Embree would then determine whether the destination of the shipment was a port contiguous to and in direct commercial intercourse with the Confederacy, or if there was reason to believe that the goods might reach the Confederacy. In either case he would demand that bond be given by the master or owner equivalent to the value of that part of the shipment that would be useful to the enemy. The amount of the shipment requiring bond would be inscribed on the manifest which the owner or master would present to Henry B. Stanton.[1]

Stanton would examine the amount which had been written upon the manifest by Embree and write that amount on a blank bond form, which would be completed by the clerks in Stanton's outer office and signed by the shipper or master (obligor) and his sureties. The obligor and sureties would then re-enter Stanton's office where they would take an oath that they had financial resources equal to the amount on the bond.[1] The manifest would then be marked by Stanton to indicate that the required bond had been given and returned to Embree's division where clearance would be granted.[2] The manifest would then be turned over to the Naval Officer, George Denison, whose duty it was to see that the requirements of the law had been complied with as to form and to investigate any irregularities either before or after shipment from the New York Port.[3]

---

[1] Hiram Barney's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 19-20; George Embree's testimony, *ibid*., p. 38; Henry B. Stanton's testimony, *ibid*., p. 188.

Within less than a year after Stanton had assumed his position the Collector of the Port, Hiram Barney, had expressed disappointment with the manner in which Stanton was performing his duties at the Custom House. He had told Secretary Chase in April of 1862 that Stanton was absent often "and his mind is more absent than his body." Stanton had failed to systematize his department and had been neither diligent nor thorough in his investigations, Barney had reported.[4]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 189.

[2] George Embree's testimony, *ibid.*, p. 38.

[3] George Denison's testimony, *ibid.*, p. 67.

[4] Hiram Barney to Salmon P. Chase, April 17, 1862, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society.

In July of 1863, Isaac Hussey, a former Treasury Department employee, had reported to Barney that bonds were being abstracted from the Ninth Division. Hussey, who had been regarded with some suspicion by Barney, had been referred to Albert Hanscom, a Deputy Collector who had recently been transferred from the Boston Port.[1] About this time Barney had become suspicious about what he later called Stanton's "hesitation or unwillingness" to institute proceedings for the condemnation of the Jose, a steamer which had been seized by Custom officials. Barney had consulted with the Naval Officer, George Denison, who had spoken to Hussey and another party who had claimed that bonds had been purchased. Denison then had written to the Treasury Department requesting an investigation of the Ninth Division. Barney had then removed Stanton from his position in charge of that division.[2]

The Solicitor of the Treasury, Edward Jordan, had investigated the charges and found that bonds had indeed been withdrawn from the Ninth Division. From Alfred T. Conklin, a commission merchant and surety for the Thomas D. Middleton Company, he had secured five of the abstracted bonds.[1] When Henry Stanton learned of the abstractions on October 28, he questioned his oldest son, who first denied and then admitted that he had received money to abstract the bonds.[2] In mid-December, Henry Stanton resigned his position as Deputy Collector voluntarily, he told Sydney Howard Gay.[3] In the same month, Joshua F. Bailey, a special Treasury agent and confidant of Chase, instituted another investigation.[4]

---

[1] Hiram Barney's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 20-21. Hussey claimed that he had been appointed by Salmon P. Chase in 1861 to report on contraband trade in the Chesepeake Bay. He had remained in that position for eighteen months and then become a self-employed informer, Isaac Hussey's testimony, ibid., p. 173.

[2] Hiram Barney's testimony, ibid., pp. 20-29. The other party to whom Denison spoke was undoubtedly Alfred T. Conklin.

Congressional Investigation

The exposure of fraud made necessary a Congressional investigation. On January 11, 1864, Congressman Reuben Fenton of New York moved that the charges of misconduct at the Custom House be referred to the Committee on Public Expenditures, headed by Calvin T. Hulburd, of St. Lawrence County, New York. Later the same month the committee began taking testimony.[1]

---

[1] Edward Jordan to Salmon P. Chase, October 27, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Daniel Cady Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Sydney Howard Gay, n.d., Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Columbia University.

[4] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, January 13, 1864, Samuel P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Bailey told Chase in January that Stonton had been removed from office fifteen minutes after the evidences of guilt were laid before Barney. It seems likely that he was referring to Stanton's separation from the Custom House in December. If so Bailey refutes Stanton's claim that he voluntarily resigned. However, Bailey may have been referring to Stanton's suspension from the Ninth Division in October. Bailey does not specify what Stanton was guilty of.

An investigation of the records of the Ninth Division was conducted by Albert Hanscom, who replaced Stanton as head of that bureau, and George Denison. Of the approximately five thousand bonds that went through Stanton's division, one hundred twenty-four were without sureties, seventy-two had no seals, eighty-nine were improperly signed and twenty-one bonds, which had been registered, were missing. Thus slightly less than seven per cent of the bonds were handled irregularly. About one fifth of the bonds had been cancelled, 86 per cent by official certificates and 14 per cent by verbal statement, to the Deputy Collector. Of the bonds that had been cancelled, nineteen, or two per cent, bore the signature of Daniel Cady Stanton.[2]

Several witnesses testified that rumors had been rampant that bonds could be cancelled for money. It was established that Custom House officials had appeared as sureties on several bonds,[3] and that company clerks had been allowed to sign bonds for obligors without power of attorney, Stanton regarding this as a mere formality.[1]

---

[1] "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 11.

[2] Albert Hanscom's testimony, ibid., p. 47.

[3] William A. Smalley's testimony, ibid., p. 139; Albert Palmer's testimony, ibid., p. 151.

Stanton supplied several reasons for the deficiencies in the department's handling of bonds. He explained that he had an inadequate clerical force and was personally much involved with other duties outside of the division. He told the investigators that he and the Treasury Department were under constant pressure from shippers to facilitate the conduct of their business.[2] The regulations drawn up by the Treasury Department on the taking of bonds were extremely vague, leaving much to Stanton's own discretion. Stanton told Hulburd's group that he had acted in a manner which he thought to be consistent with the intention of the government to facilitate the operation of business and to avoid collisions with foreign powers.[3] He admitted that he had regarded the bond system as little more than a formality since Barney, and later Stanton himself, had concluded that the government had no power to make shippers responsible for the ultimate destination of their goods. Because of this, Stanton believed that "the linchpin of the system had gone out," and that the only consequence of taking bonds was the indirect one of preventing occasional shipments.[1] Upon occasion, when shippers were known to be of good character, Stanton allowed them to give bond at a figure less than the amount stated in the manifest or to swear to their sufficiency without a formal affidavit.[2]

---

[1] Albert Hanscom's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 47; and Henry B. Stanton to Van Brunt and Sleight, November 29, 1862, offered as evidence by Albert Hanscom, ibid., p. 48.

[2] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, ibid., p. 189. Pressure from the mercantile community is indicated also in Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 24, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, Report No. 111, op. cit., pp. 187-193.

When bond-taking began, Stanton told the panel, the officials of the Custom House had anticipated that bonds were not to be cancelled. However, parties involved in the Nassau trade had secured consular certificates and had asked for cancellation of their bonds. The requests had been refused until the Treasury Department ruled to the contrary.[3] Even then the Department had not specified the requirements for cancelling bonds, as Hanscom told the committee.[4] Parties had then begun coming to Stanton with valid reasons why they could not obtain consular certificates. Stanton, therefore, had begun to accept the same type of evidence as the consul at Nassau had demanded and cancelled bonds. When the consul at Nassau changed his certificate, giving less assurance to Custom House officials that the shipments had been properly delivered, cancellations had been held up. As a result, some difficulties had arisen between the State Department and British officials. Secretary Chase, Stanton told the investigators, "wrote us a pretty short and curt letter stating that if there were any bonds of these parties that remained, that we should cancel them forthwith, and we felt that it was rather an implied censure upon us for being very strict."[1] The cancellation of bonds had consequently been made less difficult.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 198. Stanton even doubted whether the government had any right to exact bonds and consequently avoided being too strict. Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, November n.d., 1863, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

[2] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, Report No. 111, op. cit., p. 193.

[3] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, ibid., pp. 194-195.

[4] Albert Hanscom's testimony, ibid., p. 49.

Stanton admitted that he had collected a total of about three thousand dollars in fees for drawing up legal papers and notarizing documents. He insisted that his charges had always been reasonable, less than any reputable lawyer or notary would have charged. Since all of the legal work had been done during non-business hours, he defended his right to supplement his salary by practicing his profession. The taking of notary fees, he explained, had been common at the Custom House, had been done openly within the knowledge of all, and had violated no government regulation. This service expedited business since obligors had not been required to leave the premises to have documents notarized.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 195-196.

The Middleton Bond

Evidence damaging to Stanton was given to the committee by Alfred T. Conklin, surety for the Thomas D. Middleton Company. Conklin told the committee that he had secured through Henry C. Smith, a Custom House broker, several bonds upon which he had been the surety. He told the panel that upon one occasion he had been standing in Stanton's outer office and had seen Smith go in to bargain with Henry B. Stanton for the surrender of a $64,000 bond. According to the witness, Smith had gone into Stanton's office three or four times to get the price down from $650 to $600. Conklin claimed that after the price had been agreed upon the bond was given and received back within an hour's time.[2] Conklin testified that upon two other occasions, bonds had been purchased from Henry B. Stanton and that on one occasion he had seen Henry C. Smith leaning on

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 204, 212-213; Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, open letter, November 5, 1863 in The New York Times, November 6, 1863, p. 8 and New York Daily Tribune, November 6, 1863, p. 3. Stanton offered the letter in lieu of testimony in detail on the subject of fees.

[2] Alfred T. Conklin's testimony, Report No. 111, op. cit., pp. 101-103. Stanton was alleged to have charged Conklin a surety fee of $1.50 or $2.00 on that bond. Small petatoes after a $600 sale! No one but the principals were in the room so it could not have been for show.

Stanton's desk attempting to get Stanton's price down.[1]

Henry C. Smith told the committee a totally different story. He swore that he had never spoken to Henry B. Stanton on the subject of bonds. He admitted that he had pretended to see Stanton to deceive Conklin, but that all of his purchases, including the $64,000 bond, had been made from Neil Stanton, without the knowledge, as far as Smith knew, of Henry Stanton.[2]

When Smith had first testified to Joshua Bailey he disclaimed any knowledge of the purchase of bonds. The following day, after Conklin had informed him that he had told Bailey everything, Smith had told the special investigator the same story that he later told the Congressional committee. Isaac Hussey, the man who had first accused Stanton of wrongdoing, told the committee that a friend of his named S. Brownell had seen Stanton and Smith talking together at a hotel the night after Smith's first testimony. The implication was that Stanton had induced Smith to fabricate a story that would absolve Stanton.[3]

---

[1] Alfred T. Conklin's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I. Conklin said that he saw Stanton's office through the door leading from the rotunda. Stanton denied that anyone could see through the glass portion of that door, Stanton's testimony, ibid., p. 206.

[2] Henry C. Smith's testimony, ibid., pp. 105-116.

[3] Isaac Hussey's testimony, ibid., pp. 174, 177-178. Brownell was in the army when the committee held its hearings and never testified.

Stanton denied categorically that he had ever abstracted or had knowledge of the abstraction of any bond. Never, he insisted, had he spoken to Henry C. Smith on such a subject.[1] Moreover, both Stanton and Smith denied the allegation made by Hussey that they had met before Smith gave his full testimony to Bailey.[2]

The Nassau and Bermuda Bonds

The complicity of Stanton in illegitimate activities was further suggested in the testimony of a New York commission merchant, Lewis Benjamin. Benjamin told the Hulburd Committee that his business associate, A. Hoffnung, had told him that he had given Stanton several hundred dollars to facilitate the acceptance of bonds on his and Benjamin's shipments to Nassau and Bermuda.[3] It had been conclusively established by the Naval Officer that at least one such shipment to Bermuda had been transferred to a blockade runner, the Margaret and Jessie, which had subsequently been captured by the United States Navy.[4] Moreover, Ezra Cuyler, who had resided at Nassau for five months and was privy to the trade operations at that port, testified that a large part of the shipments to Nassau had been sent on to the Confederacy with the knowledge of the American consul. Hoffnung and Benjamin, according to Cuyler, had been greatly involved in this illicit trade and had managed to ship even contraband goods with the connivance of an official in the Surveyor's office in New York.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 199, 205.

[2] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, *ibid*., pp. 213-214; Henry C. Smith's testimony, *ibid*., p. 115.

[3] Lewis Benjamin's testimony, *ibid*., pp. 163-164. Hoffnung was in Nova Scotia at the time of the hearing and was not questioned by the committee.

[4] George Denison's testimony, *ibid*., p. 70.

An investigation of the records of the Custom House revealed substantial differences between the amount of bonds and the values of the cargoes on six shipments to Nassau and Bermuda in which either Benjamin, Hoffnung, or George Wolf, a relative and business associate of Hoffnung, signed as obligors or sureties.[2] The amount of the bond taken by Stanton on the captured shipment had been $28.796 when it should have been $83,757.72.[3] Surety on this bond had been William A. Smalley, a Custom House employee.

Stanton's testimony did not allay suspicion of his complicity. He admitted the receipt of a total of approximately five hundred dollars, left at his residence in three or four installments by an unidentified caller or callers.[1] Stanton told the committee that he had made it a practice to refuse all gifts from individuals who transacted business at the Custom House. He explained that he had believed that the anonymous donation had been delivered to him at the request of a lawyer friend from whom money belonging to Stanton had been embezzled. When asked by the committee if he had attempted to verify his assumption, Stanton explained that the lawyer lived a considerable distance from New York and that a mutual acquaintance, whom Stanton had approached, had known nothing on the subject. Stanton acknowledged that it had occurred to him that the money might have given him by Custom House officials as reward for his assistance in seizure cases.[2]

---

[1] Ezra P. Cuyler's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 254-257.

[2] Exhibit F, ibid., p. 285.

[3] It is not clear whether the correct amount appeared on the manifests presented to Stanton.

Of all the evidence presented to the committee, the case of Benjamin, Hoffnung and the Nassau and Bermuda bonds was the most damaging. If Henry Stanton had willingly allowed shipments, which the proper exercise of his duties would have prevented, then he was guilty of assisting in lending aid and comfort to the enemies of his country.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 209-212, 220-221. Stanton thought it possible that an envelope containing money had been left at the office and that he had taken it home unopened, laid it aside, and later thought it had been delivered to his home. Benjamin had testified that Hoffnung had told him that on one occasion he had left money on Stanton's desk. Benjamin testimony, ibid., p. 164. Stanton also acknowledged that he once found about fifty dollars more in his pocket than he thought he had collected in fees, but that he could not explain the source of the money.

[2] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, ibid., pp. 209-212, 220-221.

The Jose Case

Another incident which raised some suspicion of Stanton's activities involved the steamer called the *Jose*. Both Albert Hanscom and Isaac Hussey testified that Stanton had endeavored to induce the Naval Officer to release the ship which had been seized because it was believed that it was destined to run the blockade.[2] Hussey indicated his belief that Stanton was in some way personally involved with the *Jose*.[3]

Stanton's testimony was at variance with that given by Hanscom and Hussey. He explained that he had been the first to order the seizure of the *Jose*, a ship owned by a British subject. When the British consul had asked for the reason for the detention of the ship,

---

[1] Stanton was, of course, not directly responsible for the shipment of articles of war. His department had no responsibility for determining the nature of a shipment. Had he demanded proper sureties, however, he might have prevented shipments which included undetected contraband articles.

[2] Albert Hanscom's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, *Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64* (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 177. George Denison did not mention any such efforts by Stanton in his testimony and was not asked by the committee any questions that would have elicited a response on that subject.

[3] Isaac Hussey's testimony, *ibid.*, p. 177.

Stanton had written him that the matter was under investigation. When another letter from the same source arrived, Barney had insisted that an answer be made. Stanton, therefore, had asked the Naval Officer for facts which he could present to the British consul. Denison, Stanton reported, had seemed to take the request as a demand for the release of the vessel, despite Stanton's protest to the contrary. Stanton had been confused by Denison's agitation but had drawn up a letter urging the District Attorney to institute proceedings for the condemnation of the vessel and the case was tried.[1]

The last witness before the Committee on Public Expenditures appeared on April 20, 1864. Stanton thought that the committee report to be delivered after deliberation might make some reference to his neglectfulness but he anticipated nothing more serious. Calvin Hulburd, the chairman of the committee, assured Samuel Wilkeson, Stanton's brother-in-law and an influential correspondent of the New York Tribune, and Elizabeth Stanton and others, long after the evidence had been taken, that the evidence had indicated nothing but carelessness on the part of Stanton.[2] Stanton continued to practice law while he awaited the report.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111. Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office), I, 216-218.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 27, 1864; Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 3 [1864], Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

CHAPTER XV

STANTON'S DEFENSE

On June 25, 1864, the Committee on Public Expenditures presented its report on the Custom House to the House of Representatives.[1] On the following day the document appeared in the New York Tribune.[2] The report could hardly have been more critical of Stanton. No other major Custom House official received more than mild censure. The report was essentially an indictment of the Ninth Division and its head rather than objective account of the defects in the procedure and operation of the Custom House. The role attributed to the Ninth Division in preventing transgressions of the revenue laws was out of proportion to the power actually possessed by that division.

The report reviewed the discrepancies in the bonds as these had been furnished by Albert Hanscom and concluded that they indicated "no common carelessness if not culpable complicity."[3] Stanton, as the head of the Ninth Division, deserved the censure which he received for these irregularities. In its other charges the committee was on less solid ground. It blamed Stanton for the discrepancy that existed between the value of several shipments to Bermuda and Nassau and the amount of the bonds required. It noted that the deficiencies in the bonds examined were more numerous in bonds covering merchandise clearing for ports in the West Indies, although the evidence published with the report supported no such contention.[1]

---

[1] United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Expenditures, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 1-9.

[2] New York Daily Tribune, June 16, 1864, p. 4.

[3] Committee on Public Expenditures, Report No. 111, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

The committee rebuked Stanton for exercising his notorial powers, for drawing affidavits upon which he, in his official capacity, would have to rule, and for accepting several hundred dollars anonymously given. Stanton was criticized for lightly treating the act of cancellation of bonds, the report implying that laxity in this regard resulted in "evasion of the law and aid or comfort to the enemy."[2]

With respect to the $64,000 Middleton bond, the committee advanced as facts the allegations that Alfred T. Conklin had made, dismissed as unreliable the testimony of Henry C. Smith, and ignored Stanton's refutation of Conklin's story.[3] One reading the report and not the testimony could not help but infer that Stanton was the guilty party in that transaction.

---

[1] United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Expenditures, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 3. This is not to assert that the committee did not have such evidence, but that the reader is left unaware of the source, and therefore of the validity of the information upon which an implied charge of a serious nature is based.

[2] Ibid., pp. 3-4.

[3] Ibid., pp. 5-7.

Stanton was shocked by the damaging report. He was convinced that the facts warranted no such conclusions as the committee reached. On the serious charges made against Stanton there was no direct evidence involving him in irregular proceedings. The damaging testimonies of Conklin and Benjamin were based on reports given them by third parties: Smith in Conklin's case and Hoffnung in Benjamin's. Stanton had anticipated a far different report from the one which appeared, especially after the conversations which the chairman of the committee, Calvin Hulburd, had with Samuel Wilkeson, Elizabeth Stanton and others. When the report was made public, Elizabeth asked her brother-in-law how Hulburd could have been so misunderstood. Wilkeson was said to have replied, "Hulburd is simply a liar and a scoundrel," and he told Henry Stanton that he believed that Hulburd had been bribed.[1]

On the day that the report appeared Henry Stanton penned a letter to the New York Tribune to counter the "great injustice" which had been done to him.[2] He repeated in the letter many of the points that he had made in his testimony to the committee. He labeled false the committee's suggestion that his division was responsible for the discrepancies between the amounts of the manifests and the bonds of the Nassau and Bermuda shipments. The committee, Stanton claimed, alluded to the real value of the cargo, of which Stanton could have had no knowledge, and not to the amount on the manifest, by which Stanton had been guided. He insisted that an analysis of the bonds at the Custom House had established the correctness of his assertion.[1] This was a very important point. If Stanton was correct, the committee was guilty of either flagrant deception, extraordinarily careless use of language, or an inexcusable misunderstanding of the documents in their possession.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 27, 1864; and Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 3, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, June 16, 1864, to New York Daily Tribune, June 17, 1864, p. 8.

Stanton was compelled to deal at some length with the issue of the large Middleton bond. He criticized the committee for discounting Henry C. Smith's testimony because of the "unfavorable impression" that he had made on the committee. The committee had failed to consider, Stanton asserted, that Smith, in testifying, was admitting a series of criminal acts for which he was liable, while Conklin "was testifying under a pledge from the Government that if he would make out a case, he should be protected from harm. . . ."[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, June 16, 1864 to New York Daily Tribune, June 17, 1864, p. 8.

[2] The committee, in referring to the Hoffnung bond for the goods that were captured aboard a blockade runner, stated that they had determined the actual cargo from "the invoice or ship's manifest." Denison, who supplied the evidence for this case, did not state that that was the source of his information. Moreover, the committee followed its discussion of the Hoffnung bond with a presentation of the discrepancies in the other Nassau and Bermuda bonds, strongly implying that the source of their determination of the value of the cargoes was the ships' manifests. United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Expenditures, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 3.

One other point raised by Stanton in his letter, if he was telling the truth, casts serious doubt on Conklin's credibility and the fairness of the committee report. Conklin had testified that on one occasion, through the glass in the door leading from the rotunda of the Custom House to Stanton's office, he had seen Henry C. Smith leaning on Stanton's desk, presumably negotiating the surrender of a bond. Stanton had told the committee that the glass in the door was ground or painted and could not be seen through. When the committee had pressed the point, Stanton claimed, he had asked a member who had seen the door, "' Can a person see through it?'" According to Stanton the committee member had responded, "'I have examined it. *A person cannot see through it*.'"[2] This dialogue was not included in the published testimony. The committee report cited Conklin's testimony on the subject and concluded that he was telling the truth. It would seem to have been the height of audacity for Stanton to have fabricated the dialogue and to have had it published in a newspaper with the wide circulation of the *Tribune*!

Stanton's Guilt

There is no doubt that Stanton was guilty of laxity and mismanagement. The Custom House position was inappropriate for Stanton, a somewhat careless individual, not unduly concerned with formalities and details, and too concerned with ingratiating himself with others. Stanton was a broad-ranging man of great energy, capacity and vision. He was an excellent organizer of men for important causes; he was a failure in an office where he had to supervise the work of others. His decision to hire his son as a clerk and his failure to supervise his activities was irresponsible. Neil Stanton had been an untrustworthy, mendacious and sly boy, indolent and apparently amoral.[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, June 16, 1864, to *New York Daily Tribune*, June 17, 1864, p. 8.

[2] *Ibid*.

Yet it seems incredible that Henry B. Stanton should have cared enough about money to engage in criminal activity and to provide assistance to the Confederacy. Nothing in Stanton's past gave any indication that he could act as the committee implied that he had.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Daniel Cady Stanton, February 7, 1861, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; Daniel Cady to Daniel Cady Stanton, February 9, 1859, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress; Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Daniel Cady Stanton, December 10, no year, Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress. Neil was fortunate not to have been prosecuted for his sale of bonds. The Stantons secured him another government job through Henry's nephew, Frank Stanton, Commissioner of the Board of Enrollment. Neil was discharged when the Treasury Department discovered that he was in government employment. Neil's next venture was in Louisiana, where he earned a small fortune under the Warmoth regime during Reconstruction. "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," p. 93, New York Public Library. Elizabeth's comment on his Louisiana activities was perhaps more true than she intended. "He discharged the duties of the offices he held in Louisiana very creditably to himself." Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, June 3, [1873?], Smith Papers, Syracuse. Neil retired on his earnings and became "a gentleman of leisure." Margaret Stanton to The New Era [Chicago], November, 1885, p. 323.

One can detect in Stanton's career a strong strain of political opportunism, but nothing approaching downright dishonesty or disloyalty. Stanton admitted in his letter to the Tribune that he was careless and credulous. He insisted, however, that those that knew him "will be very slow to believe that I have set my face against my country in this hour of its terrible trial."[1]

A Conspiracy Thesis

Stanton told the readers of the Tribune that those who knew him would "sooner believe that I have been made a scapegoat for the sins of an institution with which I was for two years connected than that I have been guilty of a crime; that some political exigency has demanded a sacrifice, and that I have been selected as the victim."[2] And he wrote to his wife's cousin, "There is a mystery about it (the committee's report) which I believe will yet be unravelled. I think political necessity and personal malignity are at the bottom of it."[3]

There is reason to believe that Stanton's suspicions were justified. By looking carefully into and beyond the testimony presented to the committee, it is possible to construct a thesis holding that Stanton was the victim of not one, but two conspiracies. One facet of this theory concerns the efforts of interested parties to make Stanton a scapegoat. The second facet relates to the efforts of Custom House officials to rid themselves of an obstruction to their enrichment.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, June 16, 1864, to New York Daily Tribune, June 17, 1864, p. 8.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 27, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

Stanton as Scapegoat

One of the more surprising aspects of the House committee's report was the responsibility which it had placed upon Stanton's department for inhibiting illegal shipments to the enemy. The only way that Stanton's bureau could have prevented such shipments was by refusing to take bonds. This had only been done when the surety and obligors were not worth the amount of the required bonds. The Ninth division did not bear the responsibility for determining the character of the shipper or the nature of the goods. It was concerned rather with the financial status of the parties. The division exercised a negative check which was as likely to discourage legitimate as illegitimate commerce. Moreover, there was no evidence that any attempted prosecutions were thwarted by the absence, cancellation or insufficiencies of bonds.

Albert Palmer, the bright young man who had served as a special clerk to Hiram Barney, told the committee that its attention had been focused on the wrong department. It should have, he said, attended to Department Four, which had the responsibility for detecting false manifests and refusing clearances, and the Surveyor's department, which supervised the loading of vessels.[1]

The weakest point in the government operation to prevent shipments to the Confederacy was the neutral ports from which shipments to the seceded states were directly made. The responsibility for devising ways to detect illegal shipments had rested with the Treasury Department. The department's failure had by no means been underscored in the committee report. What requires explanation is why the committee had chosen to ignore, or at least play down, the inadequacies of the Treasury regulations, the weaknesses in other departments in the Custom House and Hiram Barney's inadequate supervision of the entire operation within his authority. Stanton suggested political necessity. He may have been close to the truth.

The Custom House was the most important patronage disposal unit in the state. It was the object of bitter strife between the rival factions of the ruling party. Because of New York's importance in national politics, ambitious men dared not ignore the affairs of the Custom House.

Salmon P. Chase was eager to become President of the United States. Politically Chase had been a very lucky man. Lincoln's appointment of Hiram Barney as Collector of the Port had been one of the unexpected strokes of fortune that Chase had hoped to turn to his advantage. Barney was a Chase man, but was not as keen a politician as Chase would have liked him to be. His management of the Custom House patronage had angered more than a few members of Chase's entourage. They had believed that Barney was being undermined by Thurlow Weed through Barney's special clerk, Arthur Palmer. Some of the more outspoken men had advised the Treasury Secretary to dispose of Barney.[1] As late as October 27, 1863, Joshua F. Bailey, Chase's confidant, was investigating the most appropriate ways to remove Barney.[2]

---

[1] Albert Palmer's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 153-154.

Early in 1864 the situation had changed. Arthur Palmer had been arrested for alleged conspiracy with illicit traders. The Chase men in New York had believed that Thurlow Weed, who had been able to control Barney through Palmer, had turned against Barney and sought to replace him as Collector with Abram Wakeman, who had been the Seward-Weed candidate for Surveyor in 1861. The advice to Chase had been to throw all of his support behind Barney.[3] If Wakeman had replaced Barney, Chase would have lost his control in New York and could have lain aside his Presidential aspirations. Barney and his management of the Custom House had to be protected. Lincoln had been disturbed by the report of frauds in the Custom House and had dispatched a letter asking Barney to come to Washington to confer. When it reached its destination, Barney had already left for the capital.[1] Whatever transpired at the meeting, Lincoln had not been completely convinced that Barney should remain in his position. In January, 1864, Thurlow Weed, not one to pass up such a splendid opportunity, had asked Lincoln to remove Barney and was assured by the President that this would be accomplished.[2] On February 12, Lincoln had informed Chase of his desire to remove Barney and make him minister to Portugal "as evidence of my continued confidence in him."[3] However, Lincoln, despite the pressure on him and his promise to Weed, changed his mind and did not remove Barney. What had caused Lincoln's reversal is not known. We do know that Bailey had information which he believed could be used to turn the tables on Lincoln's friends in the Custom House. It seems that this information had been made known to Lincoln.[1] Lincoln had also probably been aware of the rumor that Chase would resign if Barney were removed.[2]

---

[1] W. Godard to Salmon P. Chase, June 10, 1861; A. G. Tillinghast to Salmon P. Chase, June 18, 1862; Thomas B. Carroll to Salmon P. Chase, September 19, 1862, El Ellet to Salmon P. Chase, May 19, 1863; H. R. Low to Salmon P. Chase, June 8, 1863; Salmon P. Chase to Hiram Barney, October 21, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[2] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, October 27, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, December 13, 1863, January 13, 1864; George Opdyke to Salmon P. Chase, January 15, 1864; William Curtis Noyes to Salmon P. Chase, June 24, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

---

[1] Abraham Lincoln to Hiram Barney, November 11, 1863, Roy Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VII, 9.

[2] John Nicolay to Abraham Lincoln, March 30, 1864, cited ibid., pp. 268n-269n. Nicolay had just conferred with Weed, who mentioned Lincoln's promise.

[3] Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, February 12, 1864 in Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati: Wilstach, Baldwin and Company, 1874), p. 572.

A committee report prejudicial to Barney undoubtedly would have led to Barney's ouster. However, Hulburd, the committee chairman, had been a former Barnburner and it is not unlikely that his sympathies lay with the Chase men. Shortly after the committee had begun its investigation, Joshua F. Bailey had invited Hulburd to New York to confer. Bailey had been gratified with the results of the talks. Hulburd's views of the duties of the committee, Bailey had told Chase, were quite correct. He added, "His opinions in regard to the complexion of political matters are very clear and such as are gratifying to your friends."[3] In short, Barney and Chase had nothing to fear from the committee. The conference with Hulburd had not endeared Bailey to Lincoln. When Lincoln had heard of it he had told

---

[1] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, February 22, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. Lincoln's letter to Chase of February 20 refers to an affidavit which Chase had handed him. The President seemed to regard the evidence contained within it as inconsequential, while admitting that further investigation might turn up something damaging. It is likely that the affidavit was supplied by Bailey. Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, February 20, 1864 in Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati: Wilstach, Baldwin and Company, 1874), p. 573.

[2] Question of Congressman Le Blond, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 31.

[3] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, January 29, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

Chase that Bailey, an "irresponsible and unscrupulous man" had spoken to Hulburd "to endeavor to smother the investigation."[1] The important question that is left unanswered is whether Hulburd had followed through with a whitewash of the Treasury Department and Hiram Barney and had consciously chosen Stanton as the victim.[2] The nature of the investigation and the tenor of the committee report are consistent with the theory that Stanton was made a scapegoat to protect Hiram Barney's position in the Custom House.

Enemies within the Custom House

There is reason to believe that Stanton was victimized by Custom House officials. Stanton believed that two rapacious individuals, who had for a long time sought to drive him from his position, had seized upon the case of his son to carry out their plan.[3] He did not name his persecutors, but probably had in mind the Naval Officer, George Denison, and Deputy Collector Albert Hanscom. These two, with the assistance of Isaac Hussey and Alfred T. Conklin, had played a leading role in Stanton's disgrace. They had had both the motive and the opportunity to create a spurious case against Henry Stanton.

---

[1] Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, February 12, 1864, Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati: Wilstach, Baldwin and Company, 1874), p. 572.

[2] Stanton was expendable. James Briggs, an adviser to Chase, had told his chief in the fall of 1863 that Stanton, of all the men in the Custom House, had the most ability, but that he could not become the leader of the Chase forces in the state because of his insufficient wealth and because he lacked a home in which to entertain. James Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, September 30, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, November, n.d., 1863, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

George Denison had been appointed Naval Officer of the New York Port upon the pleading of Robert Irwin, an old friend of Lincoln's.[1] Lincoln had been reluctant to make the appointment since no New York politicians had by March 20, 1861, suggested Denison for a position.[2] Moreover, there had been some doubt about Denison's character. Chase had opposed the nomination and had warned Lincoln that he would regret making it.[3] Parke Godwin, of the New York Evening Post, had told Lincoln that he believed that Denison was dishonest.[4] When pressed by Lincoln for proof, Godwin had cited Denison's refusal to pay a printing bill owed to the William C. Bryant Company, and had suggested that there was other evidence.[5] Lincoln had thought that the failure to pay the printing bill was excusable and, not having been given other evidence against Denison, had appointed him Naval Officer, telling Chase that George Opdyke and others had vouched for Denison.[1]

---

[1] Robert Irwin to Abraham Lincoln, March 20, 1861, cited in Roy Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), IV 296n; and Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, May 16, 1861, ibid., p. 371.

[2] Abraham Lincoln to Robert Irwin, March 20, 1861, ibid., p. 296.

[3] Salmon P. Chase to Abraham Lincoln, May 16, 1861, ibid., p. 371n.

[4] Parke Godwin to Abraham Lincoln, April 16, 1861, ibid., p. 374n.

[5] Parke Godwin to Abraham Lincoln, April 20, 1861, ibid., p. 374n.

When Stanton was appointed to the Custom House, he had been given charge of seizures by Barney. Stanton's plan had been to keep seizures at a minimum so as not to needlessly harrass the business community.[2] Shortly after Stanton's arrival, Denison had asked Barney to give him charge of the seizures. Denison's philosophy on seizures had been the opposite of Stanton's. Because of what he regarded as Denison's "severity in judgement," Barney had told Stanton, who was to work with Denison, to exercise caution.[3]

As time passed, Stanton's bond department had required increasing attention and he was able to devote less time to seizures.[4] In May of 1863, Albert Hanscom had transferred in from the Boston Port and had been made Deputy Collector to represent Barney in seizure cases.[5]

---

[1] Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, May 18, 1861, Roy Basler (ed.), The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953), IV, 373.

[2] Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, September 24, 1861, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Hiram Barney's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 34.

[4] Henry B. Stanton's testimony, ibid., p. 187.

[5] Hiram Barney's testimony, ibid., p. 34.

Denison and Hanscom, a compatible team, had gone at their seizure duties avidly. The more seizures that they made, the more money they, and presumably the government, received. Whether the government always received its share is questionable. Samuel Myers, a commission merchant engaged in blockade running,[1] who served as a go-between for Hanscom and Denison, had suggested that out of court settlements had been intended to enrich the officials but not the government.[2] Myers had testified that Hanscom had once expressed his philosophy by saying, "Mr. Myers, I am a poor man; I am only here for a short time; I don't know but I may be discharged tomorrow; while I am here I want to make all I can."[3]

James Briggs, a Chase lieutenant, had told his chief that Denison's only interest seemed to be making money.[4] As Denison and Hanscom had gone about the seizure business, the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate seizures had become exceedingly blurred. Witness after witness before the Congressional committee had testified about the efforts of Denison and Hanscom to seize ships on the slightest suspicion, to offer through go-betweens to settle out of court for large sums of money, and to induce shippers, through third parties, to load contraband goods so that the shipments could be seized and revenue divided. Often Isaac Hussey had been a party to these lucrative activities.[1]

---

[1] Albert Hanscom's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 62, 65; Statement of Congressman Rollins, ibid., p. 136.

[2] Samuel Myers' testimony, ibid., p. 238.

[3] Samuel Myers' testimony, ibid., p. 239.

[4] James Briggs to Salmon P. Chase, September 30, 1863, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress.

When Joshua F. Bailey had investigated the Custom House, he had amassed what he considered to be substantial evidence harmful to Denison. He had believed that this was the trump card that would prevent Lincoln from removing Barney. Bailey collected affidavits, which he intended to turn over to the investigating committee of the House, incriminating Denison.[2] If these affidavits had been turned over to the committee no mention was made of them. Although Bailey had been correct in his belief that the committee was bound to turn up evidence detrimental to Denison, the committee failed to follow up the significant leads that were uncovered. Apparently no effort had been made to determine whether Denison and Hanscom were actually turning over to the government its share of the large settlements that they were making with vexed shippers. The suggestions of extortion that were made had not been followed up. The committee, instead, had contented itself with justifying the severities of the revenue officers as within the law and necessary for its proper execution.[1] In short, the whitewash brush was as liberally applied to Denison and Hanscom as it had been to Barney and the Treasury Department.

---

[1] Alexander Isaac's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 243; Arthur Palmer's testimony, ibid., pp. 152-153; Samuel Myers' testimony, ibid., pp. 233-238; James B. Archer's testimony, ibid., p. 241; Dewitt C. Graham's testimony, ibid., pp. 73-74.

[2] Joshua F. Bailey to Salmon P. Chase, February 22, 1864, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. One of these affidavits was apparently given by Chase to Lincoln. Lincoln commented, "I do not perceive anything necessarily inconsistent with the practice of detectives and others engaged in the business of 'rascal-catching'; but a closer consideration might show it." Abraham Lincoln to Salmon P. Chase, February 20, 1864 in Robert B. Warden, An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase (Cincinnati: Wilstach, Baldwin and Company, 1874), p. 573.

Stanton's Ouster

Denison and Hanscom had undoubtedly been relieved when Stanton left the Custom House. As long as Stanton was there he was a threat to their lucrative operations. This is illustrated by the Jose case. Denison's agitation over Stanton's interference in this case is quite understandable when it is understood that the owner of the vessel, Joseph Eneas, had been told that Denison would release the ship upon payment of twenty-five thousand dollars, more than the value of the ship, and that no suit would follow. When Eneas had asked Samuel Myers, who had brought Denison's offer, why Denison expected him to pay more than the ship was worth, Myers had replied, according to Eneas, that Denison had said that the ship would be worth more if sold to run the blockade.[1] Stanton had wanted to get the case into court, not dismissed. Hanscom, Hussey and Denison had wanted a large settlement out of court.

---

[1] United States, Congress, House of Representatives, Committee on Public Expenditures, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 8. The committee claimed to have investigated the alleged frauds and extortions, but nowhere in the published testimony is there any indication of their having pursued such an inquiry.

Hanscom, Hussey and Denison had wanted Stanton out of the way. It will be recalled that it was Hussey who had initiated the charges against Stanton and had been sent by Barney to present his story to Hanscom and Denison. In testifying to the committee, Hussey had been exceedingly hostile to Stanton. He had told the Hulburd group that Stanton had attempted to secure the release of the Jose and had said that he had concluded that Stanton had a share in the boat. It was Hussey who had avowed that Stanton and Smith had been seen together by a third party before Smith gave the testimony contradicting Conklin and absolving Stanton. Hussey had told the investigators that he had seen the bonds that Conklin had purchased and that they had been cancelled with Henry B. Stanton's signature. When pressed by the committee, he had changed his testimony, saying that he had seen Stanton's signature somewhere on the bonds, perhaps on the inside rather than on the outside where they had been cancelled. Upon deeper reflection, under the prodding of the committee, he had admitted that he could not be sure that the bonds had ever been cancelled![1]

---

[1] There are two versions to the story. Eneas testified that Isaac Hussey told him through a third party that the ship could be released for a couple of thousand dollars. Later, Myers had approached Eneas with an offer from Hanscom to clear the vessel for five thousand dollars. Finally, according to Eneas, Myers had arrived with Denison's demand for twenty-five thousand dollars to release the Jose. Eneas' testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 134-137. Myers testified that the twenty-five thousand dollar offer preceded the five thousand dollar offer, Denison being forced to come down in his demand because of Eneas' refusal to pay a large sum. Myers' testimony, ibid., p. 233.

Both Hussey and Hanscom were intimate with Alfred T. Conklin, whose testimony had been the basis of the committee's imputation of guilt to Stanton in the Middleton bond case. Hussey had a desk in Conklin's store and had been privy to the bond transactions. Since he had been friendly with Conklin, it would seem that he would not have brought the bonds to the attention of the authorities without Conklin's approval, since he was exposing Conklin's criminal complicity. Nevertheless, Hussey had made the charges and Conklin had produced the bonds. Denison had enough evidence to call in Solicitor Jordan. The evidence had only established the guilt of Neil Stanton. It had taken Conklin's testimony to involve Henry B.

---

[1] Isaac Hussey's testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 173-177.

Stanton and his explanation of the affair had been accepted despite the contradictory statements of both Stanton and Smith. Conklin may have been party to an agreement with Hussey, Hanscom and Denison to make a case against Stanton. If so, the promised reward must have been sufficient to induce him to risk self-incrimination, or else he had been assured that he definitely would not be prosecuted.

According to the testimony of Samuel Myers, Isaac Hussey had told him that he had a friend in the Custom House who could get bonds cancelled. Hussey then had taken Myers to see Conklin, who affirmed that bonds indeed could be cancelled. Subsequently, Myers had told the committee, he had been introduced by Hussey to the official in the Custom House who would cancel bonds. This official had asked Myers to speak to Joseph Eneas, who wanted some of his bonds cancelled, to determine how much Eneas was willing to pay for the favor. The official at the Custom House who had offered to cancel the bonds was the Deputy Collector, Albert Hanscom![1] This was the same Hanscom who later compiled the list of irregularities in Stanton's division. When Hanscom arranged a meeting with Myers to propose another lucrative scheme, the site chosen for the meeting was Alfred T. Conklin's place of business.[2]

---

[1] Samuel Myers' testimony, "Journal of the Committee on Public Expenditures," United States Congress, House of Representatives, Report No. 111, Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), I, 231-232.

[2] Samuel Myers' testimony, *ibid*., p. 232.

Conclusion

The evidence suggests, although it does not prove, that Stanton may have been correct when he told Carroll that "two wily scoundrels" had conspired to oust him.[1] How much of the evidence used against Stanton was spurious is a matter of conjecture. The only major charge against Stanton worthy of serious consideration is that he had accepted money without reporting it. Whether he had known the source of the money is unknown. This is a slender reed upon which to build a case for Stanton's duplicity. The inescapable conclusion is that Stanton's participation in fraud was not proved beyond reasonable doubt and that the committee report was grossly unfair. No prosecution against Stanton was initiated by the government. They had no case that would hold up in a court of law. Yet Stanton was virtually tried and convicted by a Congressional committee without charges having been brought against him. He was not allowed to inspect the evidence or to examine witnesses. The verdict, on the basis of the available information, must be that Stanton had been careless but not corrupt.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to Thomas B. Carroll, November, n.d., 1863, Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society.

CHAPTER XVI

NESTOR OF THE PRESS

The New York press gave little notice to the conclusions of the congressional committee which investigated the Custom House. The Report appeared in the Tribune, but Mrs. Stanton urged the editors of the other city papers not to publish it until they had her husband's reply. The World published extracts from the report and from Stanton's reply. Henry J. Raymond of the Times had an unfavorable reaction to the report and did not print it.[1] Stanton was well known by the New York editors and his good reputation undoubtedly saved him from shame and mitigated his embarrassment. Stanton continued to practice law in the city and became a regular contributor to Horace Greeley's Tribune. For the remaining twenty-three years of his life Stanton was to pursue his legal practice and write regularly for the New York City papers, thus continuing a career in journalism which had begun in Rochester in 1826.

Journalistic Career

Henry B. Stanton had begun his active journalistic career at the age of twenty-one with articles in Thurlow Weed's Monroe Telegraph. During his days as an abolitionist orator, Stanton had contributed hundreds of unsigned essays to anti-slavery, temperance and religious journals. For most of these contributions he had received no compensation.[1] In 1837 he had been considered as a possible editor of the Philanthropist, the important anti-slavery paper founded by James G. Birney which was the organ of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Society.[2] However, Stanton's services to the national society had been too important to be dispensed with. In the early months of 1839, Stanton had assumed the major responsibility for editing the Massachusetts Abolitionist, the rival to Garrison's The Liberator.[3] He had ceased functioning in this capacity as soon as Elizur Wright's services were obtained, in order to devote his time to other pressing anti-slavery duties.

---

[1] Elizabeth Cady Stanton to Gerrit Smith, July 3, 1864, Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University.

In the summer and fall of 1839 Stanton had contributed a series of essays to the New York American, published by Charles King, later the president of Columbia College.[4] The articles, entitled "Glances at Men and Things," had been a potpourri. They had included descriptions of towns, cities and states that Stanton had visited, accounts of occurrences which attended his tours, sketches of leading public figures, legends and anecdotes.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 61-62.

[2] Augustus Wattles to Elizur Wright, December 15, 1837, Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress.

[3] Wendell Phillips Garrison and Francis Jackson Garrison, William Lloyd Garrison, 1805-1879, The Story of His Life Told by His Children (New York: The Century Company, 1885), II, 276.

[4] New York American, July 25, 1839 to October 15, 1839; and Stanton, op. cit., p. 62.

Stanton's prose style was vigorous and vivid, yet like his oratory, effusive and uneven. Although many of his descriptions were grandiose, they demonstrated Stanton's unusual command of language and his keen eye for detail. His essays revealed an impulsive nature and like the spirit of the age itself, were characterized by excessive zeal. He wrote decorative but exaggerated profiles of such men as Channing, Beecher and John Quincy Adams.

While in Europe on his combined honeymoon and anti-slavery tour, Stanton had written another series of articles for the New York American. These were entitled "Foreign Rambles."[1] Similar in style to his 1839 articles, these literary excursions had described in detail historical sites and important political figures. While the author paid more attention to men and things than he did to the living conditions of the commonality, the poverty, social degeneration and exploitation which he saw did not fail to elicit sympathy and recommendations from the sincere humanitarian.

During the 1840's, Stanton had contributed regularly to the paper, The Emancipator. His editorials had been propagandistic, pommelling slavery, impugning major party politicians, and beseeching abolitionists not to forsake the Liberty banner to succumb to the blandishments of the Whigs and Democrats. These essays had revealed

---

[1] New York American, July 21, 1840 to February 12, 1841; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 75.

Stanton's exceptional skill in marshalling facts, identifying and utilizing the weaknesses of his opponents and putting logic to his own uses.

In the summer and fall of 1849, Stanton had written a series of articles on English and Irish reforms and reformers for the National Era, the Free Soil journal edited by Dr. Gamaliel Bailey. These essays, based upon Stanton's reading and his conversations with European statesmen in 1840, were so well received that he expanded them into a book, Sketches of Reform and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland.[1] The theme of this spirited account of early nineteenth century reform was the conflict between principled men and vested interests which were holding back the development of democracy. Stanton perceived the history of reform as a struggle between justice and privilege leading ultimately to the self-determination of nations, universal freedom, universal suffrage and universal education. Reform was the inevitable product of an aroused populace and determined leaders working through a flexible political process which obviated the use of force.

Stanton's prose was forceful, his information substantial, and his commitment obvious. He treated such topics as Catholic emancipation, the humanizing of the criminal code, the abolition of slavery, the Reform Bill of 1832, the reduction of postal rates, and the efforts made to mitigate the wretched treatment of the Irish and the Indians. Stanton's heroes were reformers and statesmen like James Fox, John Cartwright, Henry Brougham, Early Grey, Jeremy Bentham, Daniel O'Connell, George Thompson and Joseph Hume. His villains were the monopolists of India, the absentee landlords of Ireland, the privileged clergy, the non-productive pensioners, the great landowners of England and the abject, servile and visionless politicians. Sketches told a good deal about the nineteenth century reform; it also revealed the character of Stanton's liberalism.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Sketches of Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland (New York: John Wiley, 1850). The first edition sold out, but the publisher failed and no profit accrued to Stanton. A second edition was brought out by another publisher (New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850), and it received favorable reviews in a number of journals, Henry B. Stanton to Salmon P. Chase, April 22, 1850, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress; and Henry B. Stanton to Frederick P. Tracy, November 18, 1850, Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

In the 1850's, when Stanton was a Democrat and then a Republican, he had contributed articles to the major Albany newspapers, the Atlas, Argus and Evening Journal.[1] He had also contributed articles on legal topics to many prominent New York City papers.[2] Stanton's temporary allegiance to the Democratic Party had provided him with another opportunity to display his journalistic talents. Sandwiched between diatribes against the "tyrannical, abolitionist, monied power Federalists," i.e., the Whigs, and the "turncoat free soil Van Burenites," in the Hunker Democratic Review were articles by

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 280.

[2] Clipping, article by A. O. Wilcox, no newspaper title or date [1887?], Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress.

Stanton on French revolutionaries, Mirabeau, Verniaud and Carnot.[1] Stanton's turgid prose is exemplified in this typical passage from his biographical sketch of Mirabeau:

> In the midst of no convulsion that less completely unsettled the foundations of society than did the French Revolution--over no assemblage representing a constituency less speculative and inflammable than the French nation--in the bosom of no city less volatile and voluptuous than Paris--could a man so reckless, wayward and profligate as Mirabeau, have wielded for two years, such unbounded influence over the destinies of a throne hedged around by so many powerful institutions, and a people possessing so much intelligence and wealth. . . . His qualities of mind, of heart, and of person, fitted him to play a conspicuous part in a convulsion when single days gave birth to events as numerous and important as those which it had once required centuries to mature. His indomitable courage could master exigencies before which less bold natures quailed. His intutive tact could seize apt occasions for striking decisive blows, while less skillful leaders oscillated. His epithets of electric fire could shiver obstacles which more classic rhetoricians failed to meet. His swelling tones could rise clear above tempests that drowned voices of less lion strength. His gesticulation could shake a tribune from which less herculean frames were swept away. His demon visage could awe to silence a sea of tumultuous adversaries, before whose angry looks and words human contenances shrunk in dismay.[2]

The New York Dailies

After losing his place in the Custom House, Stanton found himself in New York City with his large family and without a position to supplement the income from his law practice. He decided to pursue a journalistic career. His reputation made securing a position an easy matter. He was hired by Horace Greeley in 1864, to write editorials for the New York Tribune, a paper to which he had contributed articles for several years. Charles Dana, who served as city editor of the Tribune until 1862, admired Stanton's work. When Dana became editor of The Sun in 1868, he acquired the services of Stanton for that paper.[1] Stanton wrote for nearly twenty years for The Sun. He specialized in politics, especially of the Empire State. Personal acquaintance with most of the major politicians in New York and many on the national level made his productions authentic and insightful. His recollections of political battles which he had witnessed added flavor to his writings. Stanton also wrote book reviews and articles on legal topics, as well as death notices of such notables as William Lloyd Garrison, Lucretia Mott, John A. Dix, Samuel Tilden, Horatio Seymour, Thurlow Weed, William H. Seward, Salmon P. Chase, Charles Sumner, Horace Greeley and Daniel Dickinson.[2] In 1871, Stanton wrote a long article on William H. Seward's trip around the world. So vivid was Stanton's reporting, based upon an interview with Seward, that the former Governor, Senator and Secretary of State, when asked by friends for an account of his trip, invariably handed them a copy of Stanton's article.[1] In 1874, Stanton wrote long and poignant articles on the last hours of his friend, the philanthropist and abolitionist, Gerrit Smith.[2]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, "Mirabeau," United States Magazine and Democratic Review, XXVII (November, 1850), 401-415. Identified as Stanton's in Henry B. Stanton to Jabez D. Hammond, November 11, 1850, Simon Gratz Collection, Pennsylvania Historical Society. The articles on Vergniaud and Carnot are not identified but are believed to be by Stanton. "Vergniaud," Democratic Review, XXVIII (February, 1851), 128-139; and "Carnot," ibid., XXVIII (April, 1851), 305-319.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, "Mirabeau," United States Magazine and Democratic Review, XXVII (November, 1850), 408.

---

[1] Frank M. O'Brien, The Story of the Sun, New York, 1833-1918 (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), p. 455.

[2] Candace Stone, Dana and the Sun (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1938), p. 39; Edward P. Mitchell, Memoirs of an Editor, Fifty Years of American Journalism (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1924), p. 216; Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 280-281.

The Warmoth Affair

Stanton enjoyed working for Dana and the respect was mutual. So cordial was their relationship that Dana, according to Henry Stanton's nephew, consented to become a party to a clearly unethical bargain with Henry Clay Warmoth, the Radical governor of Louisiana. Dana's paper had been severely critical of the corruptions that had characterized that Reconstruction regime. At the same time, Stanton was seeking a job for Neil. Stanton knew Warmoth and asked him if he could give his eldest son a job. Warmoth agreed to place Neil Stanton in his administration and promote him rapidly if The Sun would cease its blistering attacks. Dana consented, the attacks ceased, and the amoral young man proceeded to enrich himself while serving as supervisor of elections and state senator.[3]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), p. 241.

[2] The Sun [New York], December 28, 1874, and December 29, 1874, p. 1; and Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections, pp. 281-282.

[3] "Reminiscences of Robert B. Stanton," pp. 21, 94-96, Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library. Stanton's son Robert L. told Robert B. the story.

Despite such a violation of the ethics of journalism, Stanton became one of the elder statesmen of the New York press. On his eightieth birthday the New York Press Club sponsored a reception in his honor. Eminent journalists were present and distinguished politicians, including U. S. senators, congressmen, judges and two former governors sent their congratulations. Abolitionists Samuel Sewall and Elizur Wright also sent letters. The president of the club, Amos Cummings, compared Stanton to the giant old chestnut tree of Mount Aetna, unscathed by storm and earthquakes. He called Stanton a "nestor of the press, undimmed in intellect and crowned with the love and esteem of all who know him."[1]

When called upon to present a brief address to the assembled journalists, the tall slim figure with the iron-grey beard, the alert and piercing eyes, rose to read without the aid of eye glasses, a prepared address. Stanton traced the history of journalism from 1826, when there were but nine daily papers in New York State, to 1885. Of his own writing Stanton merely said that his pen had been devoted to noble aims, particularly the cause that culminated in the adoption of the Civil War Amendments. When Stanton finished his remarks, the assembly withdrew to the dining room of the Press Club for lunch and camraderie amidst the popping of champagne corks.[2]

---

[1] The Sun [New York], June 28, 1885, p. 11.

[2] The Sun [New York], June 28, 1885, p. 11; The New York Times, June 28, 1885, p. 3; New York Herald, June 28, 1885, p. 9.

Random Recollections

At the urging of his friends, the octegenarian consented to write an anecdotal chronicle of his experiences. The result was Random Recollections, a volume so well received that it appeared in three editions, the last expanded to three times the size of the first.[1] This book, still frequently cited by historians, comprised a collection of tales pertaining to famous abolitionists, politicans, lawyers and journalists, weaved into the chronology of the author's life. Stanton cast himself in the role of observer more than participant, particularly as he described events after 1840. He laid aside much of his partisanship in his engaging romp with major figures of the nineteenth century. Stanton emerges from the book as a major anti-slavery figure, but as a minor, albeit gregarious, politician.

Stanton's review contains little of the bitterness that marked some of his encounters. Only his animosity for Salmon P. Chase who had failed to come to his assistance during the Custom House investigation and for those leaders of the South whom he blamed for precipitating war, remained; the old man had learned restraint. The alert veteran of the anti-slavery wars hinted his allegiance to the New York, or conservative, abolitionists as opposed to the radical clique at Boston. He implied a censure to the extremists, but let the matter pass without emphasis. To George William Curtis, who had approved of his forbearance, Stanton wrote, "I could have said that on striking an average between good and bad effects on the Great Cause, the 'Garrisonians' were of no real value after the Freesoil outbreak of 1848, but why say it now?"[1]

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), 298 pp.

One interesting aspect of the book was Stanton's failure to identify his own part in some of the important events which he described. The Barnburners were always "they" and never "we." Great efforts were made by Hamlin, Greeley, Dana, Wadsworth, Blair, Carroll "and others of that type" to get Chase into the Treasury Department when Lincoln became President, the author maintains, ignoring his own efforts in that direction. Chase, according to Stanton was "stubborn, jealous, and always intriguing against some of his associates [in Lincoln's cabinet], especially Seward," failing to mention his role in encouraging forays with the Secretary of State.[2] Stanton's reminiscences were not of uniform quality. The work was engaging, but, like most of his writing, lacked unity.

Politics

Stanton's political activities diminished but did not end with his resignation from the Custom House. He continued to campaign for his favorites, his party allegiance as inconstant as ever. Stanton wrote the editorial that placed The Sun behind the candidacy of the Democratic Samuel Tilden for governor of New York in 1874. This piece, which compared Tilden's independence and courage to that of Silas Wright, was freely circulated by the Democratic aspirant and undoubtedly aided his victory over Stanton's former political friend, John A. Dix.[1] In 1876 Stanton and The Sun backed Tilden in his campaign for the Presidency against Hayes. The seventy-one year old journalist took the stump on behalf of his favorite, delivering a number of speeches in New Jersey.[2] Despite his efforts on behalf of Tilden and his belief that Tilden by a fair count of the votes was deserving of the Presidency, Stanton apparently covertly acted in the interests of Rutherford B. Hayes in the months following the election. An advisor to Hayes, A. N. Cole, informed the President that Stanton was a staunch Hayes man and that he was keeping his attention focused on the efforts of Tilden, David Dudley Field and others to contest the election. Said Cole of Stanton:

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to George William Curtis, March 22, 1886, George William Curtis Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 220-222.

> He is wide awake, and nothing escapes him. There is no keener and brighter man in our State, and he is perfectly reliable. I had had a free talk with him to-day. He has gotten hold of most of the quo warranto points,

---

[1] The Sun [New York], October 7, 1874, p. 2; and Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 246-248.

[2] Theodore Stanton to Chicago Inter-Ocean, January 21, 1887, William Alonzo Stanton, Record of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891 (Albany: J. Munsell's Sons, 1891), p. 462.

> and will keep track of it in its every phase.
>
> He may, probably will give you points in his observation, and whatever his statements, they can be implicitly relied upon.[1]

Stanton was once more going with the winner but the duplicity seems incredible. Stanton was obliged to write editorials backing Tilden if he was to write at all for The Sun on the election. He was, however, under no compulsion to campaign for the former Barnburner. His praise of Tilden and contention that Tilden had been cheated appeared in Random Recollections, the proofs of which he was correcting the day before he died.[2]

Stanton's inconstancy revealed a lack of loyalty which became increasingly manifest with the passing of time. Henry Ward Beecher's characterization of Stanton is very misleading. Beecher wrote, "I think Stanton has all the elements of old John Adams--able, staunch, patriotic, full of principle, and always unpopular. He lacks that sense of other people's opinions which keeps a man from running against them."[3] Stanton was a skilled propagandist whose devotion to principle was continuously threatened by his penchant for the expedient action. Abolitionism, because of the tenacity with which he adhered to it, survived despite a blackout in the early 1850's, but the companion principle of equality was shunted aside in Reconstruction. Less majestic principles and the politicians who espoused them commanded his voice and pen but not his soul. He championed them with that mixture of fact, conjecture and hyperbole which is the stock in trade of the propagandist. When his efforts served a great cause, he was ennobled; when they supported the petty in the Gilded Age, he appeared trivial and mean.

---

[1] A. N. Cole to Rutherford B. Hayes, May 31, 1887, typewritten copy of manuscript in Rutherford B. Hayes Library, Fremont, Ohio.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), pp. 244-248.

[3] Quoted in Frank M. O'Brien, The Story of the Sun, New York, 1833-1918 (New York: George H. Doran, 1918), p. 259; and in Daniel L. Phillips, Griswold, A History, Being a History of Griswold, Connecticut From the Earliest Times to the Entrance of Our County into the World War in 1917 ([n.p.]: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1929), p. 124.

Last Days

Stanton was spared most of the infirmities of age. His sight, mental ability and wit were acute although he suffered from rheumatism, which made writing difficult and painful.[1] Perhaps the last letter which he wrote to an abolitionist crony was sent in 1886 to John Greenleaf Whittier from Tenafly, New Jersey, where the Stantons had purchased a large house the previous year. In large script, necessitated by rheumatism, Stanton scratched a letter of introduction to the Quaker poet for his daughter Harriot Stanton Blatch. Stanton recalled to his old friend, who had once dedicated to him a volume of his poems, the pleasant days that they had spent together "in the quiet shades of Amesbury and on the banks of the rippling Merrimac at Haverhill." He confessed that old age was claiming them both and grieved that so few of their early associates had survived.[1] The crusade against slavery and his associations with his brother abolitionists had provided the grandest memories of a long life.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to George William Curtis, March 22, 1886, George William Curtis Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

On election night, 1886, Stanton stood outside the Fifth Avenue Hotel watching the returns as they were posted and caught a cold from which he seemed to recover. During the week of January 8, however, he took a chill in The Sun office. The old man spent a few days at home working on the proofs of the third edition of Random Recollections. The last page of Stanton's book contained the lines of the poet Moore:

> When I remember all
>   The friends, so linked together,
> I've seen around me fall
>   Like leaves in wintry weather,
>   I feel like one
>   Who treads alone
> Some banquet hall deserted,
>   Whose lights are fled,
>   Whose garlands dead,
> And all but he departed.[2]

The cold worsened and developed into pneumonia. Early on the morning of January 14, 1887, Henry B. Stanton died. Almost his last words were an inquiry as to the political doings at Albany. Two of his sons were at his side when he passed away. Mrs. Stanton was in Europe visiting her daughter, Harriot.[3] The last page had been turned in the record of a splendid warrior, a patriot, and a democrat.

---

[1] Henry B. Stanton to John G. Whittier, January 13, 1886, Pickard-Whittier Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University.

[2] Henry B. Stanton, Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887), unnumbered page after p. 298.

[3] The Sun [New York], January 15, 1887, p. 2; New York Daily Tribune, January 15, 1887, p. 5; Abby Kelly Foster, one of the staunchest of abolitionists, died the same day as Stanton.

CHAPTER XVII

STANTON'S PLACE IN THE HISTORY OF THE ABOLITIONIST MOVEMENT

Historians have encountered the abolitionists in many guises. On the one hand we have the harsh, doctrinaire, self-righteous, uncompromising reformers; on the other there are the sensitive, humane, altruistic and self-sacrificing advocates of social, political and economic justice. Any description of abolitionists should, of course, indicate that there was a wide range of differences among them. Nevertheless, the qualities generally alluded to by sympathetic and unsympathetic writers are not irreconcilable. Stanton and his associates in the movement gave no quarter to men who were their equals. Those that they attacked were well-equipped to defend themselves. The slaveowners were the most powerful force in Southern society. Those for whom the abolitionists labored were those who had been degraded, de-humanized, deprived. The slaves had only the abolitionists to speak for them. The harshness of their speech was a manifestation of their humane concern for the downtrodden. Abolitionists could be verbally cruel and unyielding and yet kind, as indeed Stanton was. The model for the abolitionists was Jesus, who could vigorously chase the money-changers from the temple and yet remain the paragon of humility, self-sacrifice, gentleness, kindness and love. The weapons of the abolitionists were words with which they pierced the consciences of guilt-ridden slaveholders.

The abolitionists were generally alert men with keen minds and strong consciences, who could not tolerate the contradiction between a belief in democracy and Christianity on the one hand and acquiescence in the sin of slavery on the other. What they condemned was oppression operating within their law, under the flag and cross to which they owed and paid reverence. The Enlightenment influence and the Romantic impulse converged in abolitionism, demanding commitment to natural rights, natural law, equality, humanitarianism and respect for the dignity and worth of the individual. The abolitionists believed that when the public was forced to face the issue, anti-slavery sentiment would develop because slavery was obviously inconsistent with the Judeo-Christian commandments and the principles of the Declaration of Independence.

The abolitionist cause was an appropriate haven for the confident, restless, religious and strongly nationalistic young Henry B. Stanton. He was imbued with a sense of mission by his Puritan background and had an inclination to follow right wherever it might lead. An optimist, Stanton had the vision of a democracy realizing its potentialities and overcoming its contradictions. Stanton's conditioning in the principles of Christianity and republicanism had predisposed him to the abolitionist movement; his conversations with Weld, the example of the British in abolishing slavery, and the influence of Finney's conversion provided the precipitating causes of his entrance into the great anti-slavery crusade.

Stanton was not deeply discontented with the world of the nineteenth century, but he was a proponent of progress, moral as well as economic. Neither a crank nor a misfit, he could not remain silent about the paramount evil of his day. The anti-slavery cause legitimized his ambition to be in the vanguard of a noble cause.

Stanton gave himself completely to the movement and his efforts did much to keep it going through its difficult early years. He lacked the brilliance, the sharp logical faculties of Theodore Weld, the trenchant journalistic talents of William Lloyd Garrison, the Patrician style and grace of Wendell Phillips, the strict rectitude of Arthur and Lewis Tappan, the chivalrous manner and reputability of James Birney. Because he was not preeminent in the possession of any one of these qualities, Stanton has not been designated as a top-ranking abolitionist. Overshadowed though he was, he possessed an abundance of qualities that made the leaders and followers of the anti-slavery movement regard him highly. His contributions to the cause were manifold and important.

When he entered the abolitionist movement Stanton assimilated the anti-slavery arguments that had accumulated throughout the centuries. He rephrased them for the multitude, dressing them in metaphor, sarcasm and wit; he delivered them with conviction and passion. As an anti-slavery agent Stanton was not an original thinker but a believer who popularized and disseminated ideas. He had a strong mind, but not an unusually creative one. His strengths lay in interpretation and popularization. It was effect that Stanton was primarily concerned with. He could, through the medium of the spoken word, cause an audience to share his feelings, his commitment. He played on the consciences of his listeners to win their souls and their coins for the cause. As an opinion-maker Stanton had an intuitive feel for the appropriate phrase, the winning argument. Sensitive to the interests of the men that he had to influence, he paid heed to their biases and their loyalties as well as to the ethical validity of the propositions around which he asked them to unite. Stanton made ingenious use of word and passion to persuade and indoctrinate. His persuasiveness was a function of his sincerity, his conviction and his personableness. He added vast numbers to the ranks of abolitionism during the momentous decade of the 1830's. No one knows the exact number of converts he made, but many of his recruits were community leaders whose influential efforts swelled the ranks of abolitionism. Stanton planted a conviction of the iniquity of slavery in tens of thousands of minds where it grew into a rich harvest.

Combined with his superb skills as a propagandist, Stanton had a talent for organizing men and turning them into an operant force. After arousing men to join the fight against slavery, he did not fail to construct an institutional structure for the anti-slavery spirit. The local societies which he labored to establish were the monuments to his success, representing the institutional embodiment of the anti-slavery sentiment. These were the cells of the abolitionist organism and their prosperity and smooth functioning were essential to the cause. They were the most important elements in the anti-slavery movement, keeping the spirit of reform alive, nurturing camraderie, satisfying the need to belong, bolstering the spirits of the converted and providing a forum where the anti-slavery message could be expounded. They reinforced the convictions of the faithful and converted others who displayed curiosity about abolitionism. Stanton advised local abolitionists on plans of organization. He selected leaders, raised funds, suggested activities, helped to make the local organizations self-sustaining and trained new agents to continue the work which he had begun.

At the headquarters of the American Anti-Slavery Society, as well as in the field, Stanton manifested his genius for organizing men. He directed and coordinated the operations of the local societies, engineered the petition campaign, raised funds, wrote letters giving direction and advice to local leaders, pressured legislatures by mail and in person, distributed literature and chose leaders. With Leavitt, Wright, Birney and Weld, Stanton hammered out the policies to be followed by the national organization.

Few of his associates--not Garrison, nor Weld, nor even Birney--fully understood the pragmatic orientation of this superb propagandist and organizer. Stanton was less concerned with men's motives than he was with their doings. He abhorred indecision and aimlessness. He wanted performance and result. It was insufficient that a man be right; he must also transform that right into result, make principle into practice. Consistency and logic were important when they contributed to the desired action. Loyalty to the ultimate objective was more important than loyalty to mere men or the purity of ideas.

More than any of his associates, Stanton understood the nature of power and he set about to harness it in the cause of abolition. Garrison sanctified his use of power through self-deification but denied its unauthorized use to others. Weld shrunk from power, apologized for it, denied his worth to use it. He humbled himself while Garrison exalted himself. Stanton was not frightened by power. To him it was the stuff of reality, the well-spring of action, an instrument that could be wielded for ill or noble ends. Stanton knew instinctively that powerful institutions would have to be enlisted against slavery. When the churches refused to assume the burden, political parties and the government had to be used. When the appeal to morals failed to win over slaveholders, it was clear to Stanton that conversion had to give way to social compulsion, that moral suasion had to be superseded by political action. Racial prejudice and discrimination would not be overcome before slavery was conquered; moral revolution would not precede political victory.

Stanton's change from the ministry to the law symbolized his change of direction from the evangelical humanitarian movement to the constitutional legal attack on slavery. The dynamic element of abolitionism made this same shift, saving the movement from sectarianism and oblivion. What the anti-slavery cause thereby lost in purity, it gained in virility.

Stanton's most significant contribution to the abolitionist movement was his continued emphasis on the importance of institutions within which the anti-slavery impulse could be preserved and through which its influence could be extended. Stanton sensed that the impulse could only be maintained by merging with vital institutions which gave priority to self-preservation. These were the political parties. Dissension existed there too, but the need to win elections served as a counter-force holding the divergent elements in harmony. Stanton was not the innovator of anti-slavery political action because that line of endeavor was about as old as the anti-slavery movement. It was the amplification and extension of political action that Stanton, Birney, Leavitt, Wright, Whittier and others advocated in the late 1830's. Stanton was not sure precisely how political action would destroy slavery, but he refused to shrink from the possibilities that politics offered, convinced that if there was a way to destroy slavery in America political power would provide it.

Garrison's anti-institutionalism, his refusal to give wholehearted support to political action and his advocacy of what Stanton regarded as extraneous issues augured a rift in the movement. The dispute between Garrison and Stanton revealed two very different modes of thought within abolitionism. Garrison was an anti-organization man, so individualistic that the only group to which he could belong was one that he dominated, which was no more than an extension of himself. Garrison balked at giving obedience to anything but his own conscience. He was consistent in maintaining that any organization could be no purer than the men who composed it. If a man was evil, no society would make him good; if he was good, he should submit to no compromises with what he knew was right. Stanton believed that there was a reciprocal relationship between men and institutions, that men could exercise significant power only through organizations, and that men were obliged to sacrifice some of their freedoms for the accomplishment of worthy objectives, even if that sacrifice had to include some cherished private opinions. Stanton believed that Garrison had weakened the anti-slavery organization. Garrison had come to personalize abolitionism. He had made the movement a haven for cranks and social revolutionaries, who, no matter how lofty their objectives, threatened to impede its main thrust. Stanton wanted no man to become bigger than the movement. He perceived the danger to the cause if Garrison were to become the unchallenged spokesman for New England's abolitionism and dominated the American Anti-Slavery Society. If Eastern abolitionism had become synonomous with Garrisonism, it would have been morally pure but divorced from politically-oriented Western abolitionism, thus preventing a strong national movement against slavery. Stanton knew that the West was crucial to the abolitionist cause. Garrison's intransigence had prevented the full synthesis of moral and political abolitionism and stood in the way of a union of the two sections in a common effort. Forced to choose between Garrison's symbolic value and a national political movement, Stanton chose the latter, and became one of the leaders in the abortive attempt to provide New England abolitionists with an alternative to Garrisonism. The failure of this endeavor proved crippling to the cause since it left Garrison with sufficient power to force a division in the movement in 1840. Nevertheless, Stanton, Birney, Wright, Leavitt and their allies had succeeded in establishing the fact that a strong sentiment for political activity existed in the East.

Stanton tried throughout the 1830's to channel abolitionist political influence through the existing parties. When this endeavor produced little success, Stanton was not sure what to do. When Myron Holley, Gamaliel Bailey and Elizur Wright advocated a third party, Stanton was reluctant to go along with them, realizing the strong attachment of most anti-slavery men for their traditional parties. When there appeared to be no alternative to this line of action, Stanton agreed to help win over the anti-slavery forces to the newly-formed Liberty Party where the cause might survive until a broader political front against slavery could be established. To Stanton the Liberty Party became the vital anti-slavery institution and he worked to make it self-sustaining and expansive. Stanton's prodigious labors for the party in New York, and particularly in Garrison's own bailiwick of Massachusetts, added significantly to its growing power. Stanton's success in securing the Liberty Party nomination for John P. Hale in 1847 paved the way for a union with discontented anti-slavery men in the major parties. The broad-based Free Soil movement was the result. Stanton played the major role in merging the Liberty Party with this hybrid offspring. In so doing he earned the execration of some leading abolitionists, but he succeeded in forging a link between former Liberty men and major party politicians which was to be of crucial importance in the 1850's and 1860's.

A latency in anti-slavery agitation during the early 1850's coincided, not coincidentally, with Stanton's aberrant behavior as a leader in New York's Democratic Party. Stanton's activities had for twenty years paralleled the course of effective anti-slavery activity. He had joined the movement during the days of strictly moral abolitionism and had followed it through political experimentation and the creation of an anti-slavery party. He had guided the anti-slavery impulse into a broad-based anti-slavery party, and, as the movement seemed to become quiescent, he directed his efforts toward bolstering the reform movement within the Democratic Party.

When events in Kansas during the mid-fifties stirred Stanton's ire, they also aroused the dormant anti-slavery impulse throughout the nation and offered the opportunity for a national anti-slavery party to emerge. Abolition was finally to be achieved through the organization and triumph of the kind of party that Stanton had long envisioned and attempted to establish. As a hard working member of the Republican Party he helped to secure its eventual victory and the consequent overthrow of slavery.

Henry B. Stanton's labors as propagandist and organizer had contributed greatly to the development of an effective organization hostile to the institution of slavery. The success of that organization rang the knell of slavery since the extremists of the South, sensing the inevitability of the victory of anti-slavery sentiment, chose immediate secession. The war that followed gave the abolitionist the victory over slavery which they had long sought. During the war Stanton continued to link the cause of the Union with the cause of the slave and to convince his northern brethren of the natural alliance of Negro and white unionists against the Slave Power. In so doing he helped to prepare the way for the passage of the great Civil War amendments to the Constitution.

Stanton must be regarded as an important abolitionist because his labors as propagandist and organizer mobilized public sentiment against slavery. Neither his talents nor his rectitude matched the giants of the movement--Garrison, Weld, Phillips--but the practical effects of his labors were greatly effective in establishing the necessary institutions to challenge slavery. In seeking an abolitionist leader whose habits of mind, convictions and actions were representative of the rank and file of anti-slavery men, one must pay particular attention to the career of Henry B. Stanton. The parallel between his career and the development of an effective anti-slavery force is strikingly clear.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The most useful single source of information on Henry B. Stanton is his own Random Recollections (third edition; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887, 298 pp.). Although less useful than an autobiography would have been, these reminiscences, written shortly before his death, serve as an outline of Stanton's life, provide some illumination to his character, and give valuable leads to other sources of information. I had the good fortune to have available, at the beginning of my research, a short biography of Henry B. Stanton in the form of a Master's thesis. This study (Rosalie Margolin, "Henry B. Stanton, A Forgotten Abolitionist," unpublished typewritten Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1962), provided an overall view of Stanton's life, clues for research and suggestive interpretations of Stanton.

Henry B. Stanton's personal papers have not been discovered. It seems likely that Stanton's children, not regarding their father as historically as significant as their mother, decided not to save his papers. A very few letters to Stanton appear in the Stanton collection in the Library of Congress. Several others are scattered among the collections of Stanton's correspondents. Useful for this study were letters which Stanton sent to anti-slavery leaders and politicians. The most useful single source of Stanton letters in manuscript form is the Gerrit Smith Collection at the Carnegie Library, Syracuse University. The letters to Smith cover a larger time period than any other collection and provide information essential to the study. Two published collections: Barnes, Gilbert H. and Dumond, Dwight L. (eds.), Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844 (2 vols.; New York: Appleton Century Company, 1932) and Dumond, Dwight L. (ed.), Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857 (2 vols.; New York: Appleton Century Company, 1938), are very useful for Stanton's anti-slavery activities, particularly in the 1830's. The other collections containing more than a few Stanton letters of importance are those of Salmon P. Chase (Library of Congress), Amos Phelps (Boston Public Library), John P. Hale (New Hampshire Historical Society), Charles Sumner (Houghton Library, Harvard University) and the miscellaneous collection at the New York Historical Society. Two or three letters appeared in each of the collections of many other important figures.

Only a small proportion of Stanton's speeches were published. From one to several, either complete or in excerpt form, are scattered in the pages of The Liberator [Boston], The Emancipator [New York and Boston], Albany Evening Journal, New York Tribune and The Principia [New York]. Some of Stanton's remarks at anti-slavery conventions are preserved in the records of the American Anti-Slavery Society and the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. His speeches and remarks at the General Anti-Slavery Convention of 1840 in London are carried in the report of that gathering issued by its sponsor, the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society.

Stanton's itinerary during the 1830's can be pretty well traced through the columns of The Liberator. The Emancipator contains a record of Stanton's activities during the Liberty Party decade of the 1840's. Thereafter the press reports of Stanton's activities are scattered in the National Era [Washington, D. C.] and in the large daily presses of New York and Albany.

Few of Stanton's associates in the abolition movement wrote memoirs. Biographies of leading abolitionists such as Birney, Weld and Whittier, do, however, make frequent reference to Stanton. Henry Stanton's political activities earned him practically no notice in the autobiographies and recollections of statesmen and the biographies of prominent office-holders make almost no mention of Stanton. These sources are valuable, nevertheless, in presenting the full scene in which Stanton operated. The general secondary works, dealing in the main with politics, also perform this function. Only the histories of the anti-slavery movement contain direct references to Stanton. The most significant in this regard is Gilbert Barnes's The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844 (Harbinger edition; New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964) and Dwight L. Dumond, Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961). Barnes focuses on the religious and moral anti-slavery activities in which Stanton played so prominent a role. Dumond has a great deal to say about Stanton's ideas and actions during the 1830's and 1840's and presents a sympathetic and detailed exposition of the anti-slavery movement, particularly in the decades before 1850. Louis Filler's, The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860 (The New American Nation Series, ed. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, Torchbook edition;

New York: Harper and Row, 1963), provides a more comprehensive view of the entire movement and places anti-slavery in the setting of early nineteenth century reform.

Stanton's political career after 1850 is documented largely by his letters and scattered accounts in the press. The account and analysis of the scandal in the Custom House is based almost completely on the official government documents, some suggestive letters written by Stanton to his friends and letters to the Secretary of the Treasury. Stanton's journalistic and legal career are rarely referred to in available sources and consequently are not dealt with to any great extent in this work. Stanton's relationship to his wife and children must also be inferred from very few sources and consequently little is said about this in this study.

Manuscript Collections

John Bigelow Papers, New York Public Library

Blair-Lee Papers, Princeton University Library

Luther Bradish Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society

Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress

Salmon P. Chase Papers, Pennsylvania Historical Society

George William Curtis Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Thomas Haines Dudley Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California

William Lloyd Garrison Papers, Boston Public Library

Sydney Howard Gay Papers, Columbia University

Joshua Giddings Papers, Ohio Historical Society

Horace Greeley Papers, New York Public Library

John P. Hale Papers, New Hampshire Historical Society

Hall Papers, New York State Library, Albany

Rutherford B. Hayes Papers, Hayes Library, Fremont, Ohio

John S. Kimball Papers, Library of the Boston Athenseum

Abraham Lincoln Papers, Library of Congress

Ellis Gray Loring Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Elijah Lovejoy Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society

James Miller McKim Papers, New York Public Library

William L. Marcy Papers, Library of Congress

Samuel J. May Papers, Boston Public Library

Edwin D. Morgan Papers, New York State Library, Albany

Amos A. Phelps Papers, Boston Public Library

Pickard-Whittier Papers, Harvard University

Samuel D. Porter Papers, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester

Lucius Robinson Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College

Henry S. Randall Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society

William Henry Seward Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester

Gerrit Smith Papers, Carnegie Library, Syracuse University

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Library of Congress

Elizabeth Cady Stanton Papers, Vassar College

Henry B. Stanton Papers, Miscellaneous Manuscripts, New York Historical Society

Robert B. Stanton Papers, New York Public Library

Charles Sumner Papers, Houghton Library, Harvard University

Lewis Tappan Papers, Library of Congress

Samuel J. Tilden Papers, New York Public Library

Charles T. Torrey Letter, Alma Lutz Collection

Frederick P. Tracy Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, California

William Tyler Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College

Daniel Ullman Papers, New York Historical Society

Martin Van Buren Papers, Library of Congress

Elihu B. Washburne Papers, Library of Congress

Thurlow Weed Collection, Rush Rhees Library, University of Rochester

Gideon Welles Papers, Illinois State Historical Library

Gideon Welles Papers, New York Public Library

Weston Family Papers, Boston Public Library

John Greenleaf Whittier Papers, Essex Institute, Salem, Massachusetts

John Greenleaf Whittier Papers, Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College

John Greenleaf Whittier Papers, Harvard University

Diedrick Willers Papers, Cornell University

C. Levi Woodbury, Miscellaneous Personal Papers, Library of Congress

Elizur Wright Papers, Library of Congress

Published Writings and Speeches of Henry B. Stanton

Address by Henry B. Stanton and Poem by Alfred B. Street, Pronounced Before the Literary Societies of Hamilton College, July 23, 1850. Utica: Roberts and Sherman, 1850. 52 pp.

Debate at the Lane Seminary (Letter of Henry B. Stanton to Joshua Leavitt, March 10, 1834), *Speech of James A. Thome of Kentucky Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society, May 6, 1834 and Letter of the Reverent Dr. Samuel H. Cox Against the American Colonization Society*. Boston: Garrison and Knapp, 1834. 16 pp.

"Mirabeau," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, New Series, XXVII, No. CXLIX (November, 1850), 401-415.

"New York Finances," *The United States Magazine and Democratic Review*, New Series, XXVIII (March, 1851), 270-281.

Random Recollections. Third edition. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1887. 298 pp.

Remarks of Henry B. Stanton in the Representatives Hall, On the 23rd and 24th of February, 1837, Before the Committee of the House of Representatives of Massachusetts, To Whom Was Referred Sundry Memorials on the Subject of Slavery. Second edition. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837. 90 pp.

Sketches of Reforms and Reformers of Great Britain and Ireland. Second and revised edition. New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850. 393 pp.

Ultraists, Conservatives, Reformers. Mr. Stanton's Address Delivered Before the Adelphic Union Society of Williams College, August 20, 1850. New York: Baker and Scribner, 1850. 40 pp.

Published Letters and Speeches

Address of the Macedon Convention by William Goodell and Letters of Gerrit Smith. Albany: S. W. Green, 1847. 16 pp.

Albree, John (ed.). *Whittier Correspondence from the Oak Knoll Collections, 1830-1892*. Salem: Essex Book and Print Club, 1911. 295 pp.

Barnes, Gilbert H. and Dumond, Dwight L. (eds.). *Letters of Theodore Dwight Weld, Angelina Grimke Weld and Sarah Grimke, 1822-1844*. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934.

Basler, Roy (ed.). *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*. 8 vols. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1953.

Cutting, Francis B. *"Hards and Softs" Reply of Mr. Cutting of New York, in the House of Representatives, January 17, 1854*. Washington: Congressional Glove, 1854. 7 pp.

Dana, Richard H. 3rd (ed.). *Speeches in Stirring Times and Letters to a Son*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910. 520 pp.

Dickinson, John R. (ed.). *Speeches, Correspondence, etc. of the Late Daniel S. Dickinson of New York*. 2 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam and Son, 1867.

Dumond, Dwight L. (ed.). *Letters of James Gillespie Birney, 1831-1857*. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1938.

"Lewis Tappan, and others: Letters of Dr. F. J. LeMoyne, an Abolitionist of Western Pennsylvania," *Journal of Negro History*, XVIII (1933), 451-474.

Marsh, Luther R. (ed.). *Writings and Speeches of Alvan Stewart on Slavery*. New York: A. B. Burdick, 1860. 426 pp.

Pickard, Samuel T. (ed.). *Whittier as a Politician, Illustrated by His Letters to Professor Elizur Wright, Jr*. Boston: Charles E. Goodspeed, 1900. 53 pp.

Stanton, Theodore and Harriot Stanton Blatch (eds.). *Elizabeth Cady Stanton as Revealed in Her Letters, Diary and Reminiscences*. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1922.

State of New York. Messages From the Governors. 11 vols. Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, State Printers, 1909.

Villard, Fanny Garrison (ed.). William Lloyd Garrison on Non-Resistance. New York: The Nation Press, 1924. 79 pp.

Reminiscences, Autobiographies and Contemporary Accounts

Beecher, Charles (ed.). Autobiography and Correspondence of Lyman Beecher. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1864.

Bigelow, John. Retrospections of an Active Life. 5 vols. Garden City: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1909-1913.

Blatch, Harriot Stanton and Alma Lutz. Challenging Years: The Memoirs of Harriot Stanton Blatch. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940. 347 pp.

Chamberlin, Katharine Beecher Stetson (comp.). "The Record of My Ancestry: The Barney-Blatch Book of Origins." Unpublished genealogy in possession of Mrs. Rhoda Jenkins.

Chapman, Maria Weston. Right and Wrong in Massachusetts. Boston: Henry L. Devereux, 1840. 177 pp.

Cochrane, John. The War for the Union, Memoir of General John Cochrane. (Title page missing.) New York: publisher unknown, 1875. 58 pp.

Collins, John A. Right and Wrong Among the Abolitionists of the United States, or the Objects, Principles, and Measures of the Original American Anti-Slavery Society Unchanged. Glasgow: George Gallie, 1841. 74 pp.

Julian, George W. Political Recollections, 1840-1872. Chicago: Jansen, McClurg and Company, 1884. 384 pp.

May, Samuel J. Some Recollections of our Anti-Slavery Conflict. Boston: Fields, Osgood and Company, 1869. 408 pp.

Nevins, Allan (ed.). Polk, The Diary of a President, 1845-1849. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1952. 412 pp.

Powell, Aaron M. Personal Reminiscences of the Anti-Slavery and Other Reforms and Reformers. New York: Anna Rice Powell, 1899. 279 pp.

Southwick, Sarah. *Reminiscences of Early Anti-Slavery Days*. Boston: Privately Printed, 1893. 39 pp.

Stanton, Elizabeth Cady. *Eighty Years and More, 1815-1897, Reminiscences of Elizabeth Cady Stanton*. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1898. 474 pp.

Warmoth, Henry Clay. *War, Politics and Reconstruction, Stormy Days in Louisiana*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1930. 285 pp.

Weed, Harriet A. (ed.). *Life of Thurlow Weed, Including His Autobiography and a Memoir*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1884.

Reports and Official Documents

American Anti-Slavery Society. *Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Organization of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia*. Thomas S. Dands and Company, 1884. 65 pp.

_______. *First Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: Dorr and Butterfield, 1834. 64 pp.

_______. *Second Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1835. 87 pp.

_______. *Third Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1836. 99 pp.

_______. *Fourth Annual Report of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1837. 140 pp.

_______. *Fifth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1838. 152 pp.

_______. *Sixth Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society*. New York: William S. Dorr, 1839. 115 pp.

_______. "Minutes of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society." (Not published.) Boston Public Library.

_______. "Minutes of the Agency Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society." (Not published.) Boston Public Library.

Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society. *Fifth Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838. 50 pp.

_______. *Right and Wrong in Boston: Annual Report of the Boston Female Anti-Slavery Society, with a Sketch of the Obstacles Thrown in the Way of Emancipation by Certain Clerical Abolitionists and Advocates for the Subjection of Women, in 1837*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837. 120 pp.

British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society. *Proceedings of the General Anti-Slavery Convention Called by the Committee of the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society and Held in London from Friday, June 12th to Tuesday, June 23rd, 1840*. London: British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society, 1841. 592 pp.

Dyer, Oliver. *Phonographic Report of the Proceedings of the National Free Soil Convention at Buffalo, New York, August 9th and 10th, 1848*. Buffalo: G. H. Derby and Company, 1848. 32 pp.

Essex County Anti-Slavery Society. *Proceedings of the Essex County Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Danvers, October 24, 1838*. Salem, Massachusetts: Gazette Office, 1838. 12 pp.

Loyal Meeting of the People of New York to Support the Government, Prosecute the War, and Maintain the Union, Held at the Cooper Institute, Friday Evening, March 6, 1863. New York: Hesbitt and Company, 1863. 80 pp.

Massachusetts Abolition Society. *The Second Annual Report of the Massachusetts Abolition Society Together with the Proceedings of the Second Annual Meeting, May 25, 1841*. Boston: D. H. Ela, 1841. 58 pp.

_______. *The True History of the Late Division in the Anti-Slavery Societies, Being Part of the Second Annual Report of the Executive Committee of the Massachusetts Abolition Society*. Boston: David H. Ela, 1841. 45 pp.

Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. *Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 20, 1836*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1836. 72 pp.

_______. *Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society with Some Account of the Annual Meeting, January 25, 1837*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1837. 72 pp. + xlviii pp.

Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society. *Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Presented January 24, 1838*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1838. 56 pp. + xlviii pp.

_______. *Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Presented January 24, 1839*. Boston: Isaac Knapp, 1839. 40 pp. + viii pp.

_______. *Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Presented January 22, 1840*. Boston: Dow and Jackson, 1840. 40 pp. + lxiv pp.

_______. *Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, Presented January 27, 1841*. Boston: Dow and Jackson, 1841. 64 pp + xvi pp.

New York State. *Documents of the Senate of the State of New York, Seventy-Fourth Session, 1851*. 3 vols. Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851.

_______. *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Third Session*. Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company (Public Printers), 1850. 832 pp.

_______. *Journal of the Senate of the State of New York at Their Seventy-Fourth Session*. Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851. 1024 pp.

Ohio Anti-Slavery Society. *Proceedings of the Ohio Anti-Slavery Convention Held at Putnam on the Twenty-Second, Twenty-Third, and Twenty-Fourth of April, 1835*. (N.p.) Beaumont and Wallace, 1835. 54 pp.

Porter, Kirk H. and Donald B. Johnson (comp.). *National Party Platforms, 1840-1956*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956. 573 pp.

United States Congress, House of Representatives. *Reports of Committees of the House of Representatives Made During the First Session Thirty-Eighth Congress, 1863-64*. 2 vols. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

Biographies

Adams, Charles F. *Richard Henry Dana*. 2 vols. New York: Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1891.

Anthony, Katharine S. *Susan B. Anthony, Her Personal History and Her Era*. First edition. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, 1954. 521 pp.

Bancroft, Frederic. *The Life of William H. Seward*. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1900.

Barnard, Harry. *Rutherford B. Hayes and His America*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1954. 606 pp.

Bigelow, John. *The Life of Samuel J. Tilden*. 2 vols. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1895.

———. *William Cullen Bryant*. American Men of Letters. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Company, 1890. 355 pp.

Birney, Catherine H. *The Grimke Sisters, Sarah and Angelina Grimke, The First American Women Advocates of Abolition and Women's Rights*. Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1885. 319 pp.

Birney, William. *James G. Birney and His Times, the Genesis of the Republican Party with Some Account of Abolition Movements in the South Before 1828*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1890, 443 pp.

Bowditch, Vincent Y. *Life and Correspondence of Henry Ingersoll Bowditch*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1902.

Carpenter, George R. *John Greenleaf Whittier*. American Men of Letters. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1903. 311 pp.

Chamberlin, Katharine B. S. (comp.). *The Record of My Ancestry, The Barney-Blatch Family Book of Origins*. Worcester: Frederic S. Bailey, 1951. 120 pp.

Donald, David. *Charles Sumner and the Coming of the Civil War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1961. 388 pp.

Field, Henry M. *The Life of David Dudley Field*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898. 361 pp.

Fladeland, Betty. *James Gillespie Birney, Slaveholder to Abolitionist*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955. 322 pp.

Fuess, Claude M. *The Life of Caleb Cushing*. 2 vols. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1923.

Garraty, John A. *Silas Wright*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1949. 426 pp.

Garrison, Wendell Phillips and Francis Jackson Garrison. *William Lloyd Garrison, The Story of His Life Told by His Children*. 3 vols. New York: The Century Company, 1885.

Gill, John. *Tide Without Turning, Elijah P. Lovejoy and Freedom of the Press*. Boston: Starr King Press, 1958. 256 pp.

Godwin, Parke. *A Biography of William Cullen Bryant with Extracts from His Private Correspondence*. 2 vols. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1883.

Going, Charles B. *David Wilmot, Free Soiler*. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1925. 787 pp.

Harper, Ida H. *The Life and Work of Susan B. Anthony*. 2 vols. Indianapolis: The Hollenbeck Press, 1898.

Hart, Albert B. *Salmon Portland Chase*. Vol. XXVIII of *American Statesman Series*. 40 vols. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1899. 465 pp.

Hibben, Paxton. *Henry Ward Beecher, An American Portrait*. New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927. 390 pp.

Hunt, Gaillard. *Israel, Elihu, Cadwallader Washburn, A Chapter in American Biography*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925. 397 pp.

Johnson, James E. "The Life of Charles G. Finney." Unpublished typewritten Ph.D. Dissertation, Syracuse University, 1959. 439 pp.

Julian, George W. *The Life of Joshua R. Giddings*. Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1892. 473 pp.

Lewis, William G. W. *Biography of Samuel Lewis, First Superintendent of Common Schools for the State of Ohio*. Cincinnati: The Author, 1857. 429 pp.

Lillie, James. *Faith and Works, or the Life of Edward Weed, Minister of the Gospel*. New York: C. W. Benedict, 1853. 304 pp.

Lutz, Alma. *Created Equal, A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton, 1815-1902*. New York: John Day Company, 1940. 345 pp.

______. *Susan B. Anthony, Rebel, Crusader, Humanitarian*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959. 340 pp.

Margolin, Rosalie. "Henry B. Stanton, A Forgotten Abolitionist." Unpublished Master's thesis, Columbia University, 1962. Typewritten.

Nevins, Allen. *Fremont, Pathmarker of the West*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939. 649 pp.

Nicolay, John G. and John Hay. *Abraham Lincoln, A History*. 10 vols. New York: The Century Company, 1890.

Nye, Russel B. *William Lloyd Garrison and the Humanitarian Reformers*. *The Library of American Biography*. Edited by Oscar Handlin. 19 vols. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1955. 215 pp.

Pearson, Henry G. *James S. Wadsworth of Geneseo*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1913. 321 pp.

Pickard, Samuel T. *Life and Letters of John Greenleaf Whittier*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1907. 804 pp.

Prentice, George D. *Biography of Henry Clay*. Hartford: Hanmer and Phelps, 1831. 304 pp.

Rawley, James A. *Edwin D. Morgan, 1811-1883, Merchant in Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1955. 321 pp.

Seward, Frederick W. *Seward at Washington as Senator and Secretary of State, A Memoir of His Life with Selections from His Letters, 1846-1861*. 3 vols. New York: Derby and Miller, 1891.

Sewell, Richard H. *John P. Hale and the Politics of Abolition*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1965. 290 pp.

Smith, William Ernest. *The Francis Preston Blair Family in Politics*. 2 vols. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1933.

Spencer, Ivor D. *The Victor and the Spoils, A Life of William L. Marcy*. Providence: Brown University Press, 1959. 438 pp.

Stanton, William Alonzo. *Record of Thomas Stanton of Connecticut and His Descendants, 1635-1891*. Albany: J. Munsell's Sons, 1891. 613 pp.

Thomas, Benjamin P. *Theodore Weld, Crusader for Freedom*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950. 307 pp.

Tiffany, Nina M. *Samuel E. Sewall, A Memoir*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898. 171 pp.

Tuckerman, Bayard. *William Jay and the Constitutional Movement for the Abolition of Slavery*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1894. 185 pp.

Underwood, Francis H. *John Greenleaf Whittier, A Biography*. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, 1884. 413 pp.

Villard, Fanny Garrison. *William Lloyd Garrison on Non-Resistance, Together with a Personal Sketch and a Tribune by Leo Tolstoi*. New York: The Nation Press, 1924. 79 pp.

Warden, Robert B. *An Account of the Private Life and Public Services of Salmon Portland Chase*. Cincinnatti: Wilstach, Baldwin and Company, 1874. 838 pp.

Welles, Gideon. *Lincoln and Seward*. New York: Sheldon and Company, 1874. 215 pp.

White, Horace. *The Life of Lyman Trumbull*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1913. 458 pp.

Woodburn, James A. *The Life of Thaddeus Stevens*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1913. 620 pp.

Wright, Elizur. *Myron Holley*. Boston: The Author, 1882. 328 pp.

Wright, Philip G. and Elizabeth Q. Wright. *Elizur Wright, the Father of Life Insurance*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937. 380 pp.

General Works

Abel, Annie H. and Frank J. Klingberg. *A Side-Light on Anglo-American Relations, 1839-1858, Furnished by the Correspondence of Lewis Tappan and Others with the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society*. Lancaster, Pennsylvania: Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1927. 407 pp.

Angle, Paul M. and Earl S. Miers. *Fire the Salute! Abe Lincoln Is Nominated! Murat Halstead Reports the Republican National Convention in Chicago, May 16, 17, and 18, 1860*. Kingsport, Tennessee: Kingsport Press, 1960. 68 pp.

Barnes, Gilbert H. *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844*. Harbinger edition. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964. 298 pp.

Brummer, Sidney D. *Political History of New York State During the Period of the Civil War*. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. XXXIX, No. 2. Edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University. New York: Columbia University, 1911. 451 pp.

Burn, W. L. *Emancipation and Apprenticeship in the British West Indies*. London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1937. 398 pp.

Carman, Harry J. and Luthin, Reinhard. *Lincoln and the Patronage*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1943. 375 pp.

Caulkins, Frances M. *History of New London, Connecticut From the First Survey of the Coast in 1612 to 1852*. New London: The Author, 1852. 679 pp.

______. *The Stone Records of Groton*. Norwich, Connecticut: New London Historical Society, 1903. 96 pp.

Crandall, Andrew W. *The Early History of the Republican Party*. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1930. 313 pp.

Cross, Whitney R. *The Burned-Over District, the Social and Intellectual History of Enthusiastic Religion in Western New York, 1800-1850*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1950. 383 pp.

Curtis, Francis. *The Republican Party, A History of Its Fifty Years' Existence and Leaders, 1854-1904*. 2 vols. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904.

Donovan, Herbert A. *The Barnburners*. New York: New York University Press, 1925. 140 pp.

Dumond, Dwight L. *Anti-Slavery, The Crusade for Freedom in America.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1961. 422 pp.

Eaton, Clement. *Freedom of Thought in the Old South*. New York: Peter Smith, 1951. 343 pp.

______. *The Growth of Southern Civilization, 1790-1860*. *The New American Nation Series*. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Torchbook edition. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961. 357 pp.

Ferree, Walter. "The New York Democracy, Division and Reunion, 1847-1852." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1953. Typewritten, then microfilmed.

Filler, Louis. The Crusade Against Slavery, 1830-1860. The New American Nation Series. Edited by Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris. Torchbook edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1963. 318 pp.

Fox, G. and Company. Highways and Byways of Connecticut. Hartford: G. Fox and Company, 1947. 343 pp.

Fuess, Claude M. Daniel Webster and the Abolitionists. Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1932. 16 pp.

Goodell, William. Slavery and Anti-Slavery, A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres, with a View of the Slavery Question in the United States. New York: The Author, 1855. 606 pp.

Goodrich, Reverend Massena. Historical Sketch of the Town of Pawtucket. Pawtucket, Connecticut: Nickerson, Sibley and Company, 1876. 189 pp.

Gray, Wood. The Hidden Civil War, the Story of the Copperheads. Compass Books edition. New York: Viking Press, 1964. 306 pp.

Green, Constance McLaughlin. Washington, Village and Capital, 1800-1878. 2 vols. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962.

Harwood, Pliny LeRoy. History of Eastern Connecticut Embracing the Counties of Tolland, Windham, Middlesex and New London. 3 vols. New Haven: Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1932.

Hurd, D. Hamilton (comp.). History of New London County with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Company, 1882. 768 pp.

Iseley, Jeter A. Horace Greeley and the Republican Party, 1853-1861, A Study of the New York Tribune. Princeton Studies in History, Vol. III. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947. 368 pp.

Kleeberg, Gordon S. P. The Formation of the Republican Party as a National Political Organization. New York: Moods Publishing Company, 1911. 244 pp.

Knoles, George Harmon (ed.). The Crisis of the Union, 1860-1861. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1965. 115 pp.

Lader, Lawrence. The Bold Brahmins, New England's War Against Slavery, 1831-1863. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, 1961, 318 pp.

Luthin, Reinhard H. *The First Lincoln and Campaign*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1944. 328 pp.

McPherson, James M. *The Struggle for Equality, Abolitionists and the Negro in the Civil War and Reconstruction*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1964. 474 pp.

Marshall, Benjamin T. *A Modern History of New London County, Connecticut*. 3 vols. New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1922.

Meyers, Marvin. *The Jacksonian Persuasion*. Vintage edition. New York: Random House, 1957. 292 pp.

Myers, Gustavus. *The History of Tammany Hall*. New York: The Author, 1901. 357 pp.

Nevins, Allan. *The Nomination of Abraham Lincoln; New Forces and New Men, An Address Delivered at the Chicago Historical Society on May 18, 1960*. Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1960. 26 pp.

______. *Ordeal of the Union*. 2 vols. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1947.

Nichols, Roy F. *The Democratic Machine, 1850-1854*. Columbia University Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, Vol. CXI, No. 1. Edited by the Faculty of Political Science of Columbia University. New York: Columbia University Press, 1923. 248 pp.

Nye, Russel B. *Fettered Freedom, Civil Liberties and the Slavery Controversy, 1830-1860*. Revised edition. East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 1963. 353 pp.

O'Brien, Frank. *The Story of the Sun, New York, 1833-1918*. New York: George H. Doran, 1918. 455 pp.

Osborn, Norris G. (ed.). *History of Connecticut in Monographic Form.* 5 vols. New York: The States History Company, 1925.

Phillips, Daniel L. *Griswold, A History, Being a History of Griswold, Connecticut from the Earliest Times to the Entrance of Our Country into the World War in 1917*. n.p.: The Tuttle, Morehouse and Taylor Company, 1929. 456 pp.

Plunkett, Margaret L. "A History of the Liberty Party with Emphasis Upon Its Activities in the Northeastern States." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, 1930. Typewritten.

Price, Harry S., Jr. "The Regions of New York in the Election of 1828." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1953. Typewritten.

Randall, James G., and David Donald. The Civil War and Reconstruction. Second edition. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1961. 820 pp.

Sanford, Elias B. A History of Connecticut. Hartford: S. S. Scranton and Company, 1887. 381 pp.

Seilhamer, George O. History of the Republican Party. 2 vols. New York: Judge Publishing Company, n.d.

Smith, Ray B. (ed.). History of the State of New York Political and Governmental. 3 vols. Syracuse: The Syracuse Press, 1922.

Smith, Theodore C. The Liberty and Free Soil Parties in the Northwest. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1897. 311 pp.

Stampp, Kenneth. The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1965. 229 pp.

Stone, Candace. Dana and the Sun. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1938. 431 pp.

Sydnor, Charles S. The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848. Vol. V of A History of the South. Edited by Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948. 400 pp.

ten Broek, Jacobus. The Anti-Slavery Origins of the Fourteenth Amendment. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951. 232 pp.

Van Deusen, Glyndon G. The Jacksonian Era, 1828-1848. The New American Nation Series. Torchbook edition. New York: Harper and Row, 1963. 290 pp.

_______. Thurlow Weed, Wizard of the Lobby. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1947. 403 pp.

Wigham, Eliza. The Anti-Slavery Cause in America and Its Martyrs. London: A. W. Bennett, 1863. 168 pp.

Wilson, Henry. History of the Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America. 3 vols. Boston: James Osgood and Company, 1877.

Articles

Brauer, Kinley J. "The Massachusetts State Texas Committee, A Last Stand Against the Annexation of Texas," Journal of American History, LI (1964), 214-231.

Eaton, Clement. "Censorship of the Southern Mails," American Historical Review, XLVIII (1943), 266-280.

Foner, Eric. "Racial Attitudes of the New York Free Soilers," New York History, XLVI (1965), 311-329.

Galpin, W. Freeman. "Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Gerrit Smith," New York History, XVI (1935), 321-328.

Grim, Paul R. "The Reverend John Rankin, Early Abolitionist," The Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XLVI (1937), 215-256.

McPherson, James M. "Grant or Greeley? The Abolitionist Dilemma in the Election of 1876," American Historical Review, LXXI (1965), 43-61.

Pitt, Theodore L. "Garrison's Failure," The American Socialist, IV (1879), 188-189.

Smith, Donnal V. "Salmon P. Chase and the Election of 1860," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly, XXXIX (1930), 516-521.

Strong, Sidney. "The Exodus of Students from Lane Seminary to Oberlin in 1834," Papers of the Ohio Church Society, IV (1893), 1-16.

Trimble, William. "Diverging Tendencies in New York Democracy in the Period of the Locofocos," American Historical Review, XXIV (1919), 396-421.

Williams, Harold P. "Brookline in the Anti-Slavery Movement," Brookline Historical Publications, XVIII (1879), 75-88.

Wolf, Hazel C. "An Abolition Martyrdom in Maryland," Maryland Historical Magazine, XLVII (1952), 224-233.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Albany Argus, May-October, 1852.

Albany Evening Journal, September 7, 1854; October, 1855.

The American Anti-Slavery Reporter [New York], May, 1834.

Boston Daily Republican, July 31, 1849.

The Emancipator (also titled *The Emancipator and Free American*, *Free American*, *The Emancipator and Weekly Chronicle*, *The Emancipator and Republican*, *The Emancipator and Free Soil Press*), [New York and Boston], March, 1837-March, 1850.

Evening Post [New York], June 10, 1852.

The Independent [New York], December 27, 1866.

The Liberator [Boston], April, 1834-May, 1840.

Massachusetts Abolitionist [Boston], February, 1839-February, 1841.

National Anti-Slavery Standard [New York], December 15, 1866.

National Era [Washington, D. C.], November, 1847-October, 1853.

The New Era [Chicago], November, 1885.

New York American, July, 1839-February, 1841.

New York Herald, November 11, 1863; June 28, 1885.

The New York Times, October 31, 1863; November, 1863; June 28, 1885.

New York Daily Tribune, November 9, 1849; January, 1850; May 29, 1861; September-October, 1862; March, 1863; October-November, 1863; May-July, 1864; June 16, 1884.

The Pennsylvania Freeman [Philadelphia], July, 1839-May, 1840.

The Principia [New York], December 15, 1860.

The Sun [New York], January 15, 1887; October 7, 1874; December, 1874; June 28, 1885.

The Times [London], June, 1840.

The World [New York], October 31, 1863; May 5, 1871.